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Editorial Notes

The recent controversy about the relative merit of literature in the regional languages in post- Independence India and the creative activity that has found expression in English whether in the Indian variety or in English as used by expatriates of subcontinental origin, specially the latter, may provide occasion for reflection over matters that would perhaps lend themselves to little or no controversy: comparative patterns of creativity in the West and those in our own literatures particularly in the one that the commentator may be most familiar with.

That there are no compulsive patterns of growth in literary sensibility that may be operative independently in diverse cultures and may be deductively arrived at in evolutionary terms is borne out by the emergence of modernism in English and in comparable phases of Urdu literature. The growth of the modernist poetics, in scholarly accounts of the subject, seems to acquire a kind of deterministic overtone if attention is focused only on the developments from the earliest phase of Romanticism through late nineteenth century French Symbolism to various short-lived literary movements of the early twentieth century. The attempt to trace modernist poetics back to the Coleridgian paradigm as centred in his theory of imagination has a retrospective validity alone. We *impose* the pattern as much as or perhaps more than we *derive* it from our isolation of facts. Coleridge's views look back more to a pre-Cartesian, religiously-oriented, idealism than forward to a literary creed of an indirect mode of expression. Some of the pronouncements of the French Symbolists too seem more to be involved in lasting epistemological problems than attempts to prepare the ground for a literary movement that was compulsively to emerge at a certain juncture in history in the early twentieth century. Literary modernism of the twenties had perhaps more to do with the personal predilections of a group of individuals and their peculiar sense of what the historical mo-

ment appeared to demand than what it could be said to have objectively led to given that the accidental is eschewed from the purview of history.

'Modernity' and 'Modernism' were debated — perhaps in a derivative manner echoing much that had long been accepted in the West — in a Seminar at Aligarh in the late sixties almost at the later end of a short-lived movement in Urdu that had paraded itself as the Indian equivalent of Western modernism. In key-note statements at the Seminar an attempt was made to equate 'Modernity' with certain intellectual values and the implication was that these values and attitudes stand in some kind of perennial opposition to certain other values or cultural stances. There was undoubtedly a great deal of confusion between 'Modernity' as an attitude opposed to cultural conservatism, revivalism and even obscurantism — something never similarly focused and formulated in the West except perhaps at the time of the struggle against medieval scholasticism in the early modern period and a little later — and what is now retrospectively recognised as literary 'Modernism' of the twenties. Some more confusion at the Seminar centred round the belief that 'Modernism' in this sense could be described in terms of certain characteristic themes, poetic attitudes and techniques. Now there is no doubt that at a certain level modernist techniques, poetic modes and themes could be and have been isolated. There was a 'modernist' manner just as there was a Metaphysical manner — tricks of diction and imagery and a certain kind of poetic rhythm. Eliot could be and was imitated by the poets of the 'thirties. Moreover, modernist poetics made common the ubiquitous, modish, casual, modern lyric. All this notwithstanding, 'modernism' has no characteristic poetic mode in the real sense of the word: nothing that can be genuinely imitated without a matching individual genius; very little that can be exported to other countries and cultures with ready formulae for application under changed circumstances.

The so-called modernist movement of the 'sixties in Urdu was more of a parody of its original in English than a genuine attempt at literary rejuvenation. In poetry it developed a manner that grossly abused the art of significant juxtaposition. The attempt to extend the domain of the poetic with a view to including

the grotesque and the húmorous bordered on the bathetic and lacked distinction. The movement gave us nothing but some really good literary criticism. Faruqui did achieve distinction as a perceptive critic of classical poetry though his heroic attempt to bring a movement into being through sheer "talk" should no doubt form only an interesting footnote in the history of Urdu literature.

The really modern though not a modernist, the true counterpart of Eliot in terms of individual genius, was Iqbal. There are genuine parallels between the two so far as their ability to make new worlds possible for poetry is concerned. As a true modernist Eliot had followed the dictum "Make it new" — not in the sense of superficially following new fashions in poetic expression or technique but making a radical attempt to subject linguistic rhythms to creative pressures of an unusual order. Iqbal too 'makes it new' though in a manner that leaves one wondering whether the radically modern is in any way different from the traditional. An attempt was made some years ago by the present writer to discover the roots of Iqbal's poetics in terms that come close to modernism: the symbolisation of experience, the poetry of allusiveness, the imaginative idealisation of the poetically intractable. Iqbal has another and unusually remarkable point of contact with Eliot. His Islam — like Eliot's Anglicanism — has been arrived at through a process of anthropological-empirical scrutiny. This is patently visible in his poetry though more clearly expressed in his Lectures. Some of his philosophical formulations leave little room for crediting him with religious convictions of the usual kind. It may then appear as ironical to some of us that from the fragile edifice of faith both Iqbal and Eliot should have been led close to the folds not just of religious conservatism but uncompromising orthodoxy.

The recent controversy to which reference was made in the beginning has done well to stress the fact for us that the post-Independence phase in the Indian languages (at least in Urdu) comes nowhere near the kind of major creativity represented in the earlier phase by a poet like Iqbal — a creativity that equals the highest in the modern West.

— Maqbool Hasan Khan

R.F. Fleissner

CHIVALRIC ORDER: FROM MALORY AND SHAKESPEARE TO TENNYSON AND DOYLE

Did old King Arthur actually reign? That prime question has been debated back and forth for many a year, as is well known; in graduate school (NewYork University) I chanced to hear the medievalist Kemp Malone claim that he had once published a paper arguing that Arthur had truly lived and then, quixotically, another contending that the supposed monarch had not. He found this rather amusing. At this point, we might also observe, in passing, that the first known prose writing of the Old English period, *The Book of Gildas,* concerns the very period of Arthur yet curiously without actually mentioning his reign. The relatively recent appearance of the popular study *King Arthur: The True Story* has lent further grist to the historical mill as reviews in England have shown (e.g., one I saw in London in August 1992 entitled "Letting the Facts Get in the Way of a Good Story"). In any event, the thesis of this essay is that these chivalric tales from pre-Renaissance England, with or without Arthur, worked their way later into Victorian and Edwardian literature, notably into the modernized versions by Tennyson (his *Idylls of the King*) and Conan Doyle (his *Sir Nigel* and *The White Company*) in terms of literary accounts originally discerned in the works of Sir Thomas Malory and then, indirectly, in those of the master Renaissance dramatist, Shakespeare, as well.

The basic argument is that both of these two latter-day writers on the popular subject of "knighthood being in flower," the Poet Laureate and then the master of popular culture respectively, were well enough versed in their Shakespeare so that they could easily have, whether consciously or not, manipulated this legendry in some crucial measure in terms of the way it had *already* been indirectly accommodated by the master playwright. For example, Tennyson is said to have been such a Bardolater that he even died with a finger symbolically in the latter's *Works,* and Conan Doyle drew probably his most familiar Serlockian phrase, "The game is afoot", from the first of the plays featuring that old

corpulent knight associated with Avalon, Sir John Falstaff, namely *1 Henry IV* (1.3.275) though a case can be made for *Henry V* as well (3.1.32).[1]

We might well also recall, in this connection, how master Shallow in 2 *Henry IV* asumed the role of one of the Arthurian knights, "Sir Dagonet in Arthur's show" (3.2.264). But it was fat Falstaff who was said to have gone even to "King Arthur's bosom" after he was laid to rest in the last play in the tetralogy (2.3.10). The overlappings in characterization and theme, moreover, are so curious between the Falstaff comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* and the Arthurian romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* that at least some kind of archetypal correlation (in terms of intellectual history) emerges to tie them together for which, see my essay in the inaugural issue of *Arthurian Interpretations*). A special technical issue involved is whether the celebrated motto of the Order of the garter, *Honi Sayt Qui Mal Pence*, appended to the end of *Sir Gawain*, relates at all to the purported occasion of the initial production of the *The Mery Wives* (said to be Garter investiture ceremony). The matter is admittedly complicated by the problem that the Garter motto at the end of the romance is commonly said to have been only a later addition (yet plausibly not one later than the composition date of the play).

Futher, it can be asked if a Renaisance dramatist could have become truly cognizant of the Gawain story, when it officially became known only during the nineteenth century, but because that concern is a purely sepculative one (not accounting for popular tradition), let us resort rather to the critical terms *archetypal* or *mythic*[2] when considering the overall affinity — a fitting enough designation, it would appear, when the whole so-called "Matter of Britain," insofar as it involved Arthur, is often dubbed a "mythic" one at the outset. After all, Milton himself had at one time decided against such raw meterial for his projected epic presumably because of its questionable factual basis.

In any case, let us recollect how Sir Arthur transformed Shakespeare's description of the death of Sir John in one of his most celebrated Sherlock Holmes stories ("The Adventures of the Three Students") in having it said that the landlady, Mrs Hudson, had "babbled of green peas at seven-thirty,"[3] in a word announced that it was time for evening repast. This collocation happens then to represent a futher distortion of the notorious emendation found in the First Folio text of *HenryV*, one attributed to the eighteenth-century editor Lewis Theobald— "a babbled of greene fields" (2.3.16) — supposedly meaning that the obese rascal in his latter days talked incoherently about the greenery of

his youth or was alluding even to the twenty-third psalm in what might be called a kind of deathbed conversion effort. (Still, Shakespeare never elsewhere is on record for having used the *term babblad).*

It has been further shown, incidentally, that James Joyce picked up Conan Doyle's accommodation (or was it not really a parody?) of this portion of the play among his many adaptations of the latter's writings, recomposing it, in his own way, in *Finnegans Wake* (10.34.35). He there decided to go one step furthr than his mentor and make fun of not the so-called Theobald emendation as such (Theobald having, in point of fact, got the idea for the new word originally from someone else), but to dabble with the difficult passage in the First Folio which the eighteenth-century editor had emended: "a Table of greene fields" (2.3.16). Hence Joyce alluded whimsically to what he deigned to designate "A very table land of bleakbard fields!" This point was brought to the fore by a leading Sherlock Holmes *aficionado*, William D. Jenkins, in his article on two Irishmen.[4] Nowadays, however, "Table" in this context is not so much related to tableland as to *tableau*(picture). Thus, in strict historical context, the Folio can be understood as making good enough contextual sense on its own. Because of the analogous phrase "table of my heart" in Sonnet 24, that analogue may well be closer textually to the original reading than Psalm 23, especially when the play tells us that the king presumabley had somehow "killed" Falstaff's "heart" (2.1.84). (This curious proximity in number [24/23] nearly arouses wonderment: whether this very digital confusion could have led to the emendation.)

In any case, the problem has been examined in detail in the specialized journals, both in terms of the original Shakespearean text and Conan Doyle's usage of it[5], and all that need hardly be reiterated here. Suffice it to say that a recent book of short stories has a title which was based on the folio version, which thereby made enough sense to the avant-garde modern author Guy Dacenport; called *A Table of Green Fields*, it deals specifically with the crux to some extent, but then rather more with problems in communication between young people in general.

Let us return, however, to Tennyson now more directly. Because the death of Arthur has been celebrated so much, Malory's original collection in 1485 having been initially *Le Morte d'Arthur* and the so-called Empire Laureate having made so much of this episode in one of his best-known *Idylls*, it is reasonable enough to infer that Shakespeare, too, had that necrology at least indirectly in mind when he composed his heartfelt (though some, with the Theobald emendation in mind, would

say sentimentalized) account of the knight Falstaff's expiration. For the death of knights is itself already prominent in Malory, being seen in particular in their dying of broken hearts (again presumably Falstaff's case at least on one level) and being beheaded, a subject that then arose again prominently in the modern musical *Camelot*, which happended to be revived during the advent of the centenary of Tennyson's own death, no doubt with his *Idylls* partly in mind.

The principal concern of this essay, however, is to broach the general matter of whether Arthurian legendry came to Tennyson's ken *filtered through* the Shakespearean vision, as it could have also come to Conan Doyle, and in terms other than death imagery per se. This lineage represents soemthing rather new, to my knowledge, in Tennyson studies, let alone Shakespearean research. Only in recent International Shakespearean biblipgraphies was reference made to something analogous: *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, a play composed from 1587/88 mainly by Thomas Hughes, the topic of a 1990 Tulane University dissertation in which the doctoral candidate contended we have a source for Shakespeare, determine thereby numerous "thematic and linguistic echoes"6. (Other playwrights are enlisted then as being similary indebted as well). the import of this little known drama is seen as demonstrating "the critical importance... as a bridge, or watershed, between the traditions of the academic and public theatre." In itself such a Shakespearean connection may appear questionable (perhaps especially so, as anti-Stratfordians enter the picture, when we notice that one of the drama's authors happened to be that other knight, Sir Francis Bncon -- of passing interest at least to Conan Doyle too). But then also during the same year Cherrell Guilfoyle's *Shakespeare's Play Within Play* was printed with its intriguing chapter "The Way To Dover : Arthurian Imagery in *King Lear*." here is Arthuriana writ large.

That fascinating piece of research draws upon some well-known factual evidence, for example that the playwright had the Fool in King Lear's tragedy refer both to Merlin the magician and to the setting of Camelot. True, some have argued that, because of this curiosity, Shakespeare was then also author of later, rather second-rate play called *The Birth of Merlin*, which does happen to cite him as co-author on its title-page[7], though in a study for the Biblipgraphical Society of America some time ago, I dared dispute this on the grounds that the association could easily have been "plagiarized" from a clebrated remark in the tragedy: "This prophecy Merlin shall make, for I live before his time"

(3.2.95). Surely such an assumption is plausible enough-if not perhaps, like a knight, itself ironclad. In any event, Guilfoyle introduces several additional facets here which are worth momentary scrutiny too. In a key line very early in the tragedy, the king loudly exclaims, "Come not between the Dragon and his wrath" (1.1.122), and she shows how a recent editor noted that "Lear may refer to the dragon of Britain," that beast being in the form of an emblem that Arthur happened to wear in his helmet, as did his father Uther Pendragon, as his very name would suggest. (The point had already been made, incidentally, by the leading Shakespearean authority on sources, Geoffrey Bullough). As for the wrath of the old king, such emotion is now traceable back to Malory in the long run; he described his Uther Pendragon as "wonderly wrothe" (Guilfoyle 97-109).

Further, other Arthurian "echoes" in *King Lear* apparently abound. Kent, for example, cites "Sarum Plain" (2.2.78), which just happened to be the site of Arthur's last battle, one predicted by Merlin, whose legendary madness may then relate at least metaphorically (or thematically) to that in the tragedy. Still, Guilfoyle states that in "none of the early versions of the Lear story does the old king" himself "go mad" (102). Does his death relate to "the mysterious territory where Tristram and Lancelot ran 'wild' and where exchanging clothes for rags or nakedness reflects the stripping and reclothing of the mind" (103)? That could well be the case. One of the most fascinating Arthurian parallels is in Guilfoyle's finding "the subtextual image of Lear and the dead Cordelia" as "a prefiguration of what is to come in the legends of the Grail: the Quest for redemption, the fulfillment, if it is to come, throuh the symbol of the death and resurrection of the king— *quondam et futurus"* (107). For Arthur is "the once and future king." A number of added parallels she sees embrce connections not so much with Malory, to be sure, as with Spenser in his romanticized epic based on Arthurian models, *The Faerie Queene,* where Arthur ties the books togther but only as prince, not yet as king. Her final summation is that the intent was "not dogmatic", for the legendry and its effects, even when religious, "do no more than colour the ancient story" (109).

Did Tennyson or Conan Doyle have any cognizance of such a viewpoint? On the deliberate level, perhaps not, but the influence may have rather been subliminal or, to extend the figure, archetypal. In support of such a proposal, let us now consider ways whereby the Poet Laureate could have gleaned aspects of the Arthurian legendry also by way of the Danish tragedy, an apt analogy which has not been probed yet, to my knowledge. Because this Empire Laureate dubbed *Maud* memorably

his "little *Hamlet*" as is well known, he was clearly well versed in the play.

Granted, because the Danish tragedy has been susceptible to so many interpretations, inviting even the lunatics, as has been said, one more like this may initially be considered suspect; analogulsy, though, such a superabundance might allow precisely for a truly pertinent additional or "new" approach. In any case, certain *tonal* comparisons between Malory and Shakespeare reveal themeselves right from the start: the respective quests for justice, the interplay of Christian and pagan qualities notably in terms of courtly love elements and "fool" figures, and as might be expected, some of the knightly imagery in general.

Clearly fratricide becomes a key concern in both Malory's works and *Hamlet*, even as in adultery, which then also plays such a role in the *Idylls*. In both early works, a queen is involved in transgression of the Sixth Commandment. A supernatural element duly enteres in, too, for theGhost in the Danish tragedy may have a certain analogous bearing on the shape-shifter Merlin in Arthurian legendry. And was all this made more pertinent for Tennyson because it had been transformed once before and thereby made previously even more popular by Shakespeare? Evidently some Catholic elements from the medieval tradition worked their way well enough into the Danish tragedy and can be seen as generally operative in later, more romantic reworkings of similar legendry. No doubt this then was one of the background stimuli for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who was raised a Catholic (as was Shakespeare) and himself knighted, and yet what can be said of Tennyson along these religious lines?

In answer, to my mind his faith shines through notably in his lyric "Crossing the Bar," which can well be taken in a traditional Christian sense.[8] It might be recalled that in 1865 painting of the poet, one which he liked the best, was the so-called "monk's portrait", said to make him look, in his earnestness, like a down-to-earth member of a monastic sect. Certainly the bar-crossing poem expresses a serene faith in old age, and a similar, paradoxically child-like faith is expressed at times (if a bit perversely) in *Hamlet*, e.g. "there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so". (2.2.246-47). Although this statement amounts to pure subjectivity if taken literally, it need not be that way. The lyric at any rate, expresses as Christopher Ricks once also well maintained, a centrifugal progress which is yet centripetal in effect (296).

A controversial point that could be cited, if only in passing, is the issue of unorthodox sexuality. Offhand, this kind of deviancy would appear

to have no bearing on Arthurian legendry, and yet Alan Sinfield, a pertinent scholar, now finds it operative enough in Tennyson, notably in *In Memoriam*, which he deigns to designate as being a homoerotic reworking of Dante's *Divine Comedy*.[9] For that matter, "Crossing the Bar" has also been closely connected with the Empire Laureate's friend Arthur Hallam, who himself happened to have composed the line"Till our souls see each other face to face" (Ricks 296), thus very close to one in the Tennyson lyric. Yet that implies no eroticism. True enough, the *Idylls* have been attacked in our century at times as womanish in style (thereby afterwards supposedly "improved upon" in poetry about knighthood by Edwin Arlington Robinson). Does not this quality also possibly enter in by way of Shakespeare, his use of Arthurian materials apropos of Falstaff and also in *Hamlet*? Sir John's linkage with Price Hal has at times been cited in homosocial terms, and let us not forget how Sarah Bernhardt once played the Danish Prince memorably on the stage. —Holmes and Watson? it is essential to remember that Watson was married, however.

My own reaction, in conclusion, is that although Sigmund Freud would doubtless have applauded and allowed for such an oblique sexual alignment, even as he endorsed the notion of bisexuality, it also is, strictly speaking, at variance with basic religious tradition and, for that reason alone, problematic to say the least. Granted, such a seemingly moralistic view may apear at times to be going out of fashion nowadays, but, in any event, to put this yet another way, Shakespeare simphy was not, let us say, a Marlowe–nor, in later times, was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, for that matter, an Oscar Slate.[10]

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NOTES

[1]All Shakespearean citations, except any in the First Folio, are from the revised Pelican edition, reference to the Folio is to the Norton facsimile. For a recent argument that Conan Doyle got his phrase from *Henry V* rather than *1 Henry IV*,see W.W. Higgins.

[2]A Standard text for such terminology is J.E.Cirlot's *A Dictionary of Symbols*. which is officially recommended reading for certified Jungian analysts incidentally.

[3]See *The Complete Sherlock Holmes, 603.*

[4]He advised me some time ago that he was incorporating the essay in a comprehensive book format

[5]See my *Shakespeare and the Matter of the Crux* 5, 175-94, 249-56. Some new material is added, though.

[6]See the summary of Dr. Corrigon's diss. in 2023A.

[7]See Mark Dominik's "The Authorship of *The Birth of Merlin*" (as well as his edition of the play); his thesis is strongly countered in a University of London diss. by Joanna Udal (now available in revised book format).

[8]See my article and rejoinder on the subject in *Connotations*.

[9]See, e.g., Sinfield's book on *In Memoriam* 113.

[10]This paper was originally read for the "Arthurian" session of the centennial symposium "Tennyson and the End of Empire" (Central State Unversity, Oct. 1992). The session also stressed Conan Doyle.

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Zahida Zaidi

THE SEAGULL — MAGIC LAKE, LOTS OF LOVE AND THE LURE OF LITERATURE

The Seagull is the most personal of Chekhov's major plays in more than one ways. It was written in October-November 1895 in a small cottage that Chekhov had built in the far corner of his estate in Melikhovo.[1] The initial stimulation came from the shooting of a wodcock in April 1892, in which Chekhov and his friend, Issac Levin were involved and which filled both of them with sad thoughts and regrets at "having robbed the world of one beautiful creature."[2] *The Seagull* also dramatizes, with suitable variations the tragic love story of Lika Mizinova who was deserted by her writer-lover Potapenko before the birth of their child. And this beautiful girl had earlier been in love with Chekhov himself.[3] Chekhov also sent a message to another of his lady friends, Lydia Avilov in response to her offer of love that she had sent to him in a pendant. In *The Seagull* Nina sends a similar message to her lover Trigorin in the same way. And by decoding this message, Ladia Avilov got Chekhov's *humorous* reply.[4] In addition to these personal anecdotes, some critics have also suggested that Chekhov embodied some of his own anguish as writer in Trigorin's experimental play. But in my opinion these suggestions are wide of the mark.

These facts and conjectures are sufficient to add personal interest to a play that Chekhov characterizes as a comedy. But *The Seagull* is a personal drama in a deeper sense also, for in it Chekhov is musing deeply and working out certain solutions, not only for his characters but also for himself. Some of these are the problems of experience and meaning. Love, suffering and happiness, beauty and its evanescence, creative freedom and moral responsibility of a writer and artist: nature and scope of literature, creative aspirations of Man and the dead weight of inertia and convention, human potential and anguish of an unlived life and last but not the least the problems of new forms in literature and theatre. Some of these problems are also

interwoven in the thick texture of his later plays, particularly in *Uncle Vanya* and *Three Sisters*. But in *The Seagull* there is an aura of greater urgency about them and they are also more easily identifiable.

The Seagull also exhibits other salient features of Chekhov's mature plays, viz. thickness of texture, intricate structure of symbols and images, orchestration of moods, themes and characters: richness of particularity and an overall poetic atmosphere that lends this temporal world the glow of timelessness.

Chekhov's dramatic art has often been characterized as symphonic — an orchestration of subtle notes creating a complex and harmonious pattern. This is true of *The Seagull*, too, to a certain extent. But in case of this play, the analogy of painting is more appropriate. A painting which may be fascinating as a whole, but which reveals its secrets gradually, as we follow the subtle shadings of colours and tones, delicate harmony of lines and curves and essential relationship of parts to the whole, and which, after this recognition, becomes more moving and meaningful in its totality.

II

The key-note of the play is struck at the end of Act I, when the kind-hearted Dr. Dorn, who has been listening to Masha's outpourings about her desperate love for Trepliov, for the nth time, wants to console her, but cannot find words, All that he is able to say is: "How highly strung you all are, how highly strung and what oceans of love: Oh the magic Lake: But what can I do my child, what can I do? (*The Seagull*, Act I) Dr.Dorn's words closely echo Chekhov's own, in which he described his "new play" to his friend Suvorin in a letter dated 21st Oct. 1895. This is what he says: "You will find in it a landscape, a view of the lake, much talk about literature, and five tons of love." Thus the Lake, Love and Literature lend *The Seagull* its dominant pattern of colouring — colours that break themselves into subtle shades and delicate tones and finally through intricate curves of themes and moods and cross currents of symbols and images blend into a new harmonious whole.

Love is the dominant theme and a persistent preoccupation of almost all the characters in the play. Medividenko, the schoolmas-

ter is in love with Masha, Masha is in love with Trepliov, Trepliov is in love with Nina, Nina, who initially responds to his love, later falls passionately in love with the famous writer Trigorin. Trigorin is attached to the middle aged actress Ardadina, and in course of the action, falls in and out of love with Nina. Arkedina is in love with Trigorin, Even Masha's middle aged mother Paudina is in love with Dr. Dorn. Dr. Dorn, who appears to be quite self possessed, has been, in his younger days, the hero of several amorous adventures. Even Arkadin's elderly and ailing brother, Sorin,plays with the idea of having been in love with the young and beautiful Nina. The sole exception is the vulgar and insensitive Shamrayev, who is neither in love with anybody nor is loved by anyone. But while the dwellers around the enchanted lake are all in love, their love experiences differ widely in scope, intensity and depth. Indeed, Chekhov's variations on the theme of love in *The Seagull* can be favorably compared with Shakespeare's variations on this theme in his Romantic comedies. Medvidenko's love for Masha is simple modest and self-effacing, but "the magic lake" lends it a touch of poetry, Masha's love for Trepliov is self-conscious, sentimental and static. She wears black and fancies herself to be a tragic heroine. Her love is unrelated to anything in life, and has made her sluggish and indifferent, even to herself.

Paulina's love for Dr. Dorn is also one-sided, although the sage doctor is more indulgent to her than Trepliov to his unwanted lover. Her love is self-effacing, no doubt, but also jealous and beggarly and at times even silly and absurd.

Arkandina's love for Trigorin is strong and possessive and tends to find expression in theatrical modes. it is essentially self-indulgent and thrives on flattery and self deception. It can neither inspire Trigorin in his creative endeavours, nor herself with fresh and generous thoughts. She is totally engrossed in her fame and glamour and quite oblivious of others, even those who are closest to her. Indeed this romantic friendship with a famous writer is more or less a fashionable affair, serving to keep alive the legend of her beauty and youth.

Trigorin's love for Arkandina — if love it can be called — is passive and will-less, more a matter of habit than of a serious commitment. He is more interested in fishing and culling attractive phrases for his novels than in his mistress Arkadina. He is himself aware of

his limitations and wonders why women love him. His love for Nina, on the other hand, is a sudden infatuation, it is like a dream — irresistible and enveloping but quite unsubstantial. He tells Arkadina that it is going to be the one great passion of his life, but it turns out to be a fleeting and irresponsible passion. His amorous affair with Nina, resulting in the birth and early death of a child comes to an end all too soon, leaving her bored and helpless and still desperately in love with him.

Nina's love for Trigorin is an all-absorbing passion. It begins as a kind of hero worship and a fascination with fame and glory, but soon develops into a mature and committed passion, giving sense of direction to her life. Inspired by her flamelike passion, she makes the one crucial decision of her life, which is to shake off her chains, leave her impossible family and go to the stage to realise her dreams. It is tragic love. The brief spell of Nina's happiness leaves behind a long trail of suffering, torments, humiliations and dark doubts about herself, but she accepts all this with courage. For Nina this experience of love is a form of self encounter — a painful journey of self discovery from innocence to maturity and from shallow ambition to lucid vision and humility. Two years later when she visits Trepliov, she confides in him. "I keep thinking — thinking and feeling that I'm growing stronger with every day that passes.. What really matters is not fame and glamour not the things i used to think abut, but knowing how to endure things, how to bear our cross and have faith. *(The Seagull*, Act. IV) She still cherishes the memories of her youthful love for Trepliov but for her there is no going back to that Arcadia, symbolized in the "magic lake" and romantic dreams.

Trepliov's love for Nina, on the other hand, is touching and romantic. It is also related to his creative aspirations. But it is not strong enough to root out his obsessive involvement in his mother, who not only neglects him, but also, never fails to remind him of his insignificance. But Trepliov continues to crave for her attention and approval. And this psychological dependence on his mother has undermined Trepliov's self-esteem and thwarted the natural growth of his personality Similarly his young romantic love for Nina, when thwarted, turns into a desperate and self-destructive passion As he lays the slaughtered seagull at Nina's feet he tells her that he would soon kill himself as he has killed the bird For him the denial of his love means the

drying up of the sources of his creativity as he tells Nina; "as if I woke up one day and saw this lake suddenly drying up or draining away into the ground: *(The Seagull)*, Act II). He clings to this passion even when all hope is gone and when she visits him two years later he tells her: "It is not in my power to stop loving you.. I feel that my youth has been suddenly torn away from me. I call out your name, I kiss the ground where you walked." *(The Seagull, Act IV)* We are touched and moved, no doubt by his love and suffering. But his excessive emotional dependence on his beloved robs it of a tragic dimension. It lacks the courage of lucid self-knowledge and open ended freedom which we notice in Nina's unhappy love for Trigorin. Robert Luis Jakson in his admirable essay on *The Seagull*, entitled "The Empty Well, The Dry Lake and The Cold Cave" interprets it in terms of the "Myth of Plato's cave". According to this interpretation Nina is the wanderer, who makes the difficult journey of Platonic "steep and rugged ascent" to face reality, while Konstantin Trepliov chooses to remain forever in the secure world of shadows and forms. And so there is no possibility of their reunion, "for the wanderer would endure anything rather than return to this world and live as the cave dwellers live." [6]

This interpretation throws interesting light on the relationship of Nina on Trepliov, their different psychological motivation and their diverse destinies. But to my mind *The Seagull* is not just an allegory of "Illusion and Reality. It is a rich poetic statement incorporating other perceptions and deeper insights, which are gradually revealed by following the intricate pattern of themes and images, moods and events and thus capturing the inner movement of the play.

Coming back to the theme of love in *The Seagull*, we notice that while the love experiences of these characters differ vastly, ranging from mature committed passion and an all-consuming romantic love, to fleeting infatuations melodramatic posturing, fashionable affairs and downright silly sentimentality, they have one thing in common. They are all, with one exception, unrequited and consequently unhappy experiences of love creating an atmosphere of longings, hopelessness, frustrations, sufferings, violent outbursts and sad resignations. This points to a great disparity between human aspirations, dreams and desires and the actual facts of life, suggesting an indifferent and absurd scheme of things. According to Robert W. Corrigan "Chekhov saw human life as a pathetic, or ludicrous, or tragic or mean-

ingful attempt to bridge this gap."[7]

Chekhov seems to be saying "to be in love is to be unhappy and lonely. But he chose this theme in play after play as his interests lay in the private dreams of his characters, and love was the chief means of making this solitude vibrate. He believed that people who love and dream and hope and suffer were more alive that those who had never known this experience. In *The Seagull* Sorin who missed this experience is a poignant example of this anguish of an unlived life. The poor man is unwilling to die because he never lived. And yet his acute sense of having missed a profound experience makes him more humane than a person like Shamrayev, who is totally engrossed in materialistic concerns and is selfish and vulgar to his bone-marrow.

The only answer to the pangs of an unsolicited love or the anguish of a life without love, the play seems to suggest, is literature and creativity. Literature and theatre loom large in *The Seagull* and discussions of these interpenetrate the action of the play. The discussion of literature incorporates the themes of creative freedom and moral responsibility, writer's vocation and his position in society, writer's world view and technical problems of fiction, creative aspirations of man and the dead weight of inertia and convention and transience of human life and permanence of Art. The debate on theatre touches upon the state of contemporary theatre, its decadence and need for new forms and the role of theatre in society, etc.

These discussion are not super-imposed on the play but emerge quite naturally from its action and interaction of characters. The four principal characters of the play are directly involved in literature and theatre. Trigorin is a famous writer and Trepliov is a young aspiring writer and dramatist. Similarly Arkadina is a well-established and glamorous actress of the commercial theatre while Nina is a young and aspiring actress. Apart from these four, who throw light on the subject from different angles, Dr. Dorn also makes a very significant contribution to this debate, for though not a writer or an artist himself, he is a perceptive critic of Literature and Arts.

But in *The Seagull* even the minor characters, who are not directly involved in it, cannot resist the lure of Literature. They cherish a secret dream of being writer themselves or else their lives to be cast in an artistic mould. This appears to them the only way of redeeming

their pointless suffering and giving some shape and direction to their haphazard existence.

Masha, as pointed out above, fancies herself to be a tragic heroine. She always wears black and dreams to be immortalized in that role. She defines herself in striking literary terms. And Trigorin, who is a poet of surfaces finds in her a promising subject for a short-story.

Medvidenko, the poor schoolmaster, too, has his view on literature, which as a school teacher he is expected to have. But in *The Seagull* such is the lure of literature that even this simple and humble man would like his life to be cast in a literary mould. After the fiasco of Trepliov's experimental play, he muses wistfully: "Someone aught to write a play about how our sort of people live, I mean we teachers and get it produced somehow. It's hard life, a very hard life *(The Seagull Act I)* This, of course shows his preference for the realistic type of drama, but also reflects a secret dream of his drab life being redeemed by the "magic" touch of literature.

Similarly Sorin, the elderly retired civil servant, too has a secret literary ambition as he confides in his nephew Trepliov: "I wanted passionately — One was to get married and the other was to be a novelist .... Yes, even to be a minor writer must be rather nice when all is said and done. And he too, would like to be immobilized in a literary mould. He even gives Trepliov a subject for a novel, along with a title "The Man who Wanted" which, would, hopefully tell the story of his life in a moving way.

Dr.Dorn, the sage doctor, does not express a wish to be cast in literary form but he too would have liked to be a writer, which he believes, could have elevated his life beyond common concerns. He says: "I have lived a varied life, I have chosen my pleasures with discrimination. But if it had ever been my lot to experience the exultation an artist feels of the moment of creative achievement. I believe I should have come to despise this material body of mine and all that goes with it. My soul would have taken wings and soared in the heights" ((*The Seagull)* Unlike the others, what he desires is not the permanence of a fixed form, but the freedom of spirit, a larger perspective and a comprehensive vision, which he believes are the special gifts of creativity.

Talking of subsidiary characters in Chekhov's plays Ronald Peacock says: "Chekhov is an expert in sketching with varying degrees of caricature the drollery of subsidiary characters: small scale line and colour that are less than the foreground but more than the background, delicate and vivid pieces in a pattern."[8] In *The Seagull* these characters are quite indispensable for the completion of the larger design, and they acquire an added interest by virtue of their involvement in the literary theme. Like Pirandello's "six characters" they wish to be immobilized in their dominant passions. And like those famous characters they are "in search of an author". Acutely conceived and vividly realized they crave for a drama that could be the "raison d'etre" of their pointless, haphazard existence.

IV

But in *The Seagul* it is not only the "dramatis personae" who are carried away by the fascination of literature. Their creator, too, for once, has succumbed to this temptation. *The Seagull* abounds in literary echoes and allusions that underline its significant themes, lend depth and dimensions to its images and a glow of timelessness to its temporal events.

The most significant and pervasive framework of reference, however, is *Hamlet* itself. The key-note is struck when in Act I, just before the curtain goes up on Trepliov's experimental drama. Trepliov and his mother address each other in words borrowed from *Hamlet*. To Arkadina's: "O Hamlet speak no more, Thou turnest my eyes into my very soul. Trepliov replies; " And let me wring they heart, for so I shall, if it be made of penetrable stuff. *(Hamlet,* Act III,Sc. 4) This exchange of lines from *Hamlet* not only establishes the strained relationship between mother and son, but also places this experimental drama in its right perspective, which now we can see not as a pale imitation of the "play within play" in *Hamlet*, but a self-conscious variation on that device. To some extent Trepliov, too, can be seen as a later day Hamlet, conceived in a slightly comic vien and played in the minor key. Similarly his relationship with his mother can also be seen as a modernized version of Hamlet-Gertrude relationship, this framework of reference is upheld in a good part of the play , e.g. in Act II of *The Seagull*, Trepliov's strongly reminiscent of Hamlet-Ophelia scene,

which she describes in these words: "Lord Hamlet with his doublet all unbraced. No hat upon his head, Pale as his shirt And with a look so piteous in purport/ As if he had loosed out of hell/ to speak of horrors he comes before me." *(Hamlet* act II, Sc. I lines 78-83)

Trepliov, too, comes to speak of horrors, for he, too, has seen a ghost — albeit a more realistic one — in Nina's coldness to him, and her growing relationship with Trigorin. Similarly the Trepliov Arkadina scene in Act III of *The Seagull* can be seen as a subdued and modernised version of the famous 'closet scene' in act III, sc.4 of *Hamlet.*

But much important than these echoes and similarities is the use that Chekhov makes of Trepliov's experimental drama. It is as essential to the larger design of *The Seagull* as the 'Play within play' staged by Prince Hamlet in Act III Sc.2 of *Hamlet.* It interpenetrates the entire action capturing deeper currents of meanings and evolving into a multidimensional symbol. Some of the insights related to this central symbol can be briefly summed up here:

1) As the curtain goes up on this experimental play, we see the lake and the rising moon which is the back-drop of this play and which suggests the fusion of the human world, the world of Nature and the world of human creativity.

2) The back-drop of the 'magic lake'and the rising moon is also a symbol of Trepliov's youthful dreams and creative aspirations.

3) Similarly in act IV, the dilapindated structure of the stage, with the wind howling through the tattered curtains symbolizes the crumbling down of Trepliov's dream of love and painful fracturing of his creative aspirations.

4) It triggers off the action and helps to define relationships among various characters, particularly the complex relationship of Arkadina and Trepliov.

5) This experimental drama is the starting point of a debate about literature, theatre and creativity which interpenetrate the entire action.

6) It embodies one of the central themes of *The Seagull.* The play presents, allegorically the bitter struggle of human creativity (World Soul) with the forces of materialism, inertia and decadence (Devil the Father of Eternal Matter) which is dramatized here in a rather confused and pretentious manner. The same theme is projected realistically by Chekhov in *The Seagull* in highly refined and relaxed manner.

7) 'The Play within Play' in *The Seagull* reveals its meaning and significance only gradually, in course of the action. And Nina who earlier found it " too abstract" and lacking in human interest, goes out in Act IV, reciting lines from this play, which now mean more to her in the light of her own bitter struggle against the forces of insensitiveness and vulgarity in order to save her creative spark and artistic aspirations.

All in all the 'Play within Play' in *The Seagull* is a highly subtle and economical device to trigger off the action, project significant themes and reveal characters and their relationship and in course of the action it evolves into a complex and multidimensional symbol with subtle nuances and rich connotations. And this is a characteristic feature of Chekhov's artistic method in his major plays.

V

We may now turn to the theme of literature and creativity as reflected in the views and life-styles of the four principal characters and Dr. Dorn, who, as hinted above, are more important in this respect.

For Trigorin, a famous and popular writer, writing is a routine activity and a compulsive self-expression and he complains that it has deprived him of a full-blooded participation in life. He has talent and felicity of expression, and his fiction has charm and technical competence, but it lacks depth and significance, and even according to his own estimation he is a "poet of surfaces — a landscape painter". He is perhaps following "the enchanted path of literature without a definite goal in mind" as Dr.Dorn might have put it. But on closer examination his dilemma as a writer is symptomatic of a deeper malaise of society. Trigorin is both a product and a prophet of a way of life which lacks intellectual integrity and moral resilience. He is a typical product of a cliche-ridden society. In the words of Vlandimir Yermilov, "he is in the grip of commonplace, exhibiting certain feature of Philistinism"[5] He is described as simple and modest, but also sluggish and willless. He drifts on the waves of fleeting sensations and external pressures. His moral sense even "this great passion" as he describes his affair with Nina, fails to bring about a change in himself or in his literary outlook. For him literature is not search for meanings or creation

of new values but a reinforcement of popular outlook and current tastes. This casual attitude has blurred his vision and he fails to make any significant contribution to the world of ideas or literary values. However, his long speeches in Act II are interesting as a brilliant account of the psychology of popular writer.

Arkadina's case is much worse, for while Trigorin expresses a sense of dissatisfaction with himself and his literary output, she is complacent through and through. She has talent and charm but only a superficial acquaintance with literature. She can quote *Hamlet* from memory and is proud of having acted only in "standard plays". But in fact she has never given a serious thought to literature or theatre. For her the stage is a source of glamour and prestige and not a serious artistic commitment. She can talk endlessly of her good looks, fine figure and expensive dresses and of the "gorgeous receptions" in her honour, and is exclusively concerned with perpetrating the fast fading legend of her youth. She is openly contemptuous of fresh talent and new experiments in the theatre, and rejects Trepliov's experimental play even before the curtain goes up on the first act. Her attitude to her profession is symptomatic of her moral apathy and intellectual stagnation.

Consequently neither Trigorin nor Arkadina make any significant contribution to the theme of literature and theatre. Trigorin's long speeches throw some light on the state of writer in a commercialized society, and Arkandina's remarks and behaviour reflect the dubious values of decadent commercial theatre. But otherwise they are more or less indifferent to the intellectual and moral implication of their respective professions.

VI

In sharp contrast to these two, Dr. Dorn makes a very significant contribution to this debate. For though not a writer or an artist himself, he is a thoughtful and perceptive critic of Literature and Arts. His position is idealistic and he holds his views with great conviction and expresses them with utmost clarity. His plea is for depth of feeling, clarity of thought, breadth of vision and high seriousness in literature. Commenting on Trepliov's experimental play, abounding in abstract ideas, he says that "a writer is perfectly justified in choosing his

subject from the realm of abstract ideas for only things conceived in high seriousness can be beautiful." (*The Seagull,*, Act I), but at the same time he also believes that, "a work of art must express a clear, definite idea — you must know what you are aiming at." According to him creativity has its own pitfalls, and he warms Trepliov that, "If you follow the enchanted path of literature without a definite goal in mind, your talent will ruin you" (*The Seagull, Act* I).

In short, for Dr.Dorn, significance and universality of theme, clarity of vision, high seriousness and sense of moral responsibility are the hallmarks of authentic literature. He also believes that literature is the chief source of elevating the spirit and broadening one's intellectual and moral horizon. It is literature alone which enables one to transcend the narrow boundaries of materialistic existence.

It is interesting to note that Dr.Dorn's advice to Trepliov, closely echoes Chekhov's own advice to his younger brothers, who had artistic aspirations. His view on literature, as elaborated in several of his letters including one to Suvorin are also quite close to views attributed to Dr. Dorm here. Indeed, in Dr. Dorn, Chekhov has created a character, who with considerable authority expresses several convictions of his creator on art, literature and creativity.

VII

Nina and Trepliov also make an impressive contribution to the theme of art and literature, which can be extracted both from their various remarks and their creative endeavours Nina's youthful interest in theatre, as hinted above, gradually develops into a serious artistic commitment, which is a meaningful way of relating herself to life. In the final act of the play she talks of the thrill and a sense of power and freedom that she has experienced while acting on the stage. Art for her has now become a form of self-encounter and a means of liberating the spirit which enables her to transcend the mundane worries of existence.

Trepliov's more elaborate statement about art and literature is his experimental drama itself which dramatizes the bitter struggle of creative spirit (World Soul) with force of materialism, inertia and the dead weight of convention. This play, which was never allowed to be finished was, no doubt, expected to show the ultimate triumph of the

"World Soul' over "Devil the Father of Eternal Matter." And as such we notice a basic similarity in the views of Dr. Dorn, Nina and Trepliov concerning art, literature and creativity.

Here I would like to draw attention to a widely-held critical view in which Nina and Trepliov are projected as shrphy contrasting characters — Nina representing the triumph of creative spirit and Trepliov as a miserable failure.

According to Robert Luis Jackson, Trepliov is an aimless wanderer in the world of shadows and dreams and victim of Oedipus complex, while Nina leaves the "magic world of illusion to make the difficult journey to reality and knowledge. In his words, "Nina's horse, Pegasus — the winged horse of inspiration stands ready to take her away".[10] On the other hand the personal tragedy of Trepliov, according to him is that "he chose not to make the journey of life — overwhelmed by his character, he remained, forever in the shadow of the fear of life.[11]

Vladimir Yermilov, a Russian critic comes, more or less, to the same conclusion. For him Nina is not the stricken Seagull, but "the beautiful frail and free creature soaring high up towards the sun" and the theme of "soaring flight — of victory" is according to this critic, "the leitmotif" of this dramas.[12] As for Trepliov, Yermilov asserts that, "He can do nothing with his talent, because he has neither aim, nor faith, nor knowledge of life."[13] And since "innovation cannot exist in a vacuum" he is bound to be a failure.

To my mind *The Seagull* is neither an allegory of illusion and reality nor a case study of Trepliov's mother fixation or a paean of glory to Nina's spiritual triumph, but a rich poetic statement, which among other things dramatizes the persistent struggle of creativity with inertia, stagnation, Philistinism and the tyranny of rigid and insensitive establishment. Seen from this point of view, Nina and Trepliov are spiritual allies, Dr. Dorn their guide and philosopher and Trigorin and Arkadina their chief adversaires. There are striking similarities in the situation of Nina and Trepliov. Both are young and aspiring artists, trying to relate themselves to life in a meaningful way and both have to fight against odds. Nina has been dispossessed by her father and step mother, who are hostile to her artistic aspiration. And Trepliov has been dispossessed by his mother and stepfather (Trigorin) who are totally insensitive to his feelings and creative endeavours. For both

of them love is an important source of inspiration. But Trepliov is deprived of his love (Nina) by Trigorin and Nina is deprived of her love (Trigorin) by Arkadina).

As for Trepliov being a miserable failure and Nina being a symbol of spiritual triumph, it is not supported by facts, viz. the sequence of dramatic events and its verbal structure, on which we may focus our attention for a while.

As the play opens Trepliov is looking forward to the performance of his experimental drama in which life will be seen "not as it is, or as it ought to be but as we see it in our dreams." (*The Seagull*, Act I.) He is intensely critical of the smugness, artificiality and conventional morality of the contemporary theatre and preoccupied with the possibility of revitalizing it with new forms "we need new forms" he says in his youthful enthusiasm "and if they are not available, we might have nothing at all" (*The Seagull*, Act I). Then comes his experimental play, which is expected to give a concrete shape to his artistic ideals. This play should be seen, neither as Chekhov's own search for new forms, nor as his parody of decadent theatre as it has often been seen, but simply as a raw expression of Trepliov's fond thoughts and artistic ideals. He has conceived it as an allegory of the creative spirit — "The World Soul" in which "the consciousness of men is merged with the "Devil — the Father of Eternal Matter" and finally to conquer the material force after which "Matter and spirit will merge in beautiful harmony and the kingdom of cosmic will, will come into being" (*The Seagull*, Act I). So we see that the experimental form of this play is a natural corollary of Trepliov's cosmic vision, which could be translated only in an allegorical manner. Perhaps as a young writer he attaches rather undue importance to the problem of form. But two years later when we see him with his own experience as writer behind him, his views appear to be more thoughtful and perceptive. He says: "I'm becoming more and more convinced that it is no a matter of old and new forms — one must write without thinking about forms and just because it pours forcefully from one's soul." (*The Seagull* Act IV) which simply means that now Trepliov attaches greater importance to the depth of experience and spontaneity of the creative process, which could itself be the guarantee of an appropriate form. But while; more balanced in his theoretical formulations, as a creative writer he is still fighting against the "Devil" which we now see to be none other than

the dead weight of convention, moral and intellectual stagnation and sinister hold of cliches and Philistinism. He notes with horror that he "who talked such a lot about new forms in art, is now slippling into the rut little by little" (*The Seagull*, Act IV)

We may also note in passing that Trepliov's anxiety about slipping into the commonplace is in sharp contrast to Trigorin's description of his problems as a new writer. For Trigorin, the problem of a new writer is basically his anxiety about success and recognition — particularly by the literary establishment, while Trepliov is struggling to define his identity as a writer without compromising his artistic integrity for the cheap coin of success.

Thus to maintain that Trepliov is an artistic failure and his suicide a desperate acknowledgment of his defeat, is not only unkind but also untrue. When we see Trepliov in Act IV, he is only 27 and he has been writing for about two years. His stories are accepted by prestigious magazines, and he is paid for them. He is within reasonable distance of fame and success. Indeed, he has his own circle of admirers. And though Trigorin finds fault with his stories Dr.Dorn praises them warmly. He certainly cannot be labelled as a "miserable failure" and his suicide as an acknowledgment of his defeat. It should rather be seen as a gesture of protest against the hold of establishment and a refusal to compromise with its dubious standards.

Nina, no doubt, commands greater respect on account of her courage, perseverance and humility. But she, too, is far from being a symbol of ultimate triumph of the creative spirit, soaring upward in the sunny sky, or dashing away on the winged horse of inspiration. For Nina, as we see her in Act IV, is, no doubt, wiser and self accepting, but she is also tormented and troubled. And as she leaves for her next assignment, she is painfully aware of the soul-killing realities of her life — a journey in the third class compartment with dregs of society and disgusting attentions of upstart businessmen in the place of her work. "Life is coarse" she admits to Trepliov. We may also note in passing that although she does not accept Trepliov's offer of love as she is still in love with Trigorin, but she is moved by it and feels a spiritual kinship with him. She shares her inmost thought with him and goes out reciting lines from Trepliov's experimental play, which now mean more to her than they did earlier.

Thus the theme of literature and arts in *The Seagull* explores

the creative potential of man in the framework of an insensitive and even hostile and an indifferent universe. While Nina's career exemplifies a precarious possibility of an authentic and creative way of life, Trepliov's suicide fills us with sad thoughts at the waste of talent and creativity in an absurd universe.

The theme of literature and creativity like the theme of love and loneliness is totally contained in the dramatic framework and interwoven in the thick texture of images and symbols. In Chekhov's major plays even ordinary details and casual remarks assume a symbolic significance. In Act I Masha causally observes that "It's close, we might have a thunderstorm." And soon after, the sudden clash between the mother and son (Arkadina and Trepliov) we witness a storm in a teacup. But we know that tensions aren't spent out and the situation has explosive possibilities. Finally in Act IV when the imminent explosion is close at hand, a stormy wind rages outside, making noise among the trees and in the chimneys. Similarly as Nina hastens on the horseback to act in Trepliov's play, the sky and darkling elm trees create a poetic mood. The set are highly symbolic in Chekhov's major plays. The symbolic significance of the outdoor setting of Act I, with the view of the lake, rising moon and its reflection in the lake has already been discussed. Act II also has an outdoor setting with bright sunshine, flower beds and a view of the lake, which is in harmony with the carefree mood of the characters in general and with Nina's elation in the flowering of her love for Trigorin in particular. Trepliov's brief appearance with the dead seagull, however, casts a dark shadow. It is like a cold wave which makes even Nina shudder. The last two acts are played in narrow interiors. The congested setting of Act III suggests the confusion created by Trepliov's attempted suicide and hasty departure of Arkadina and Trigorin. The dressing and undressing of Trepliov's wound by Arkadina, too, has symbolic overtones. The narrow and dark interior of Act IV, suggests Trepliov's hopelessness in love and the narrowing possibilities of his life. In the same act several visual images like the wheel-chair and ottoman bed in the drawing room suggest Siren's plight who is fast moving towards his cold and dark net. Similarly a host of other details and concrete images in the play are pregnant with meaning and enhance the communicative possibilities of the action.

But the most significant, all-pervasive and multidimensional

symbols in the play are the "play within play", the seagull and the "magic lake." The significance of the "play within play" has already been discussed. Similarly the seagull and the lake, too, interpenetrate the entire drama and are also interrelated, I'm drawn to the lake like the seagull says Nina in Act I. And in Act I, Trigorin explains to Nina his idea of a short story, inspired by the slaughtered seagull. His words are:" A young girl like you has lived by a lake. She loves the lake as the Seagull does And a man chances to come along, sees her, and having nothing better to do, destroys her, just like this Seagull here." (*The Seagull*, Act II) And as the play proceeds, we realize that Nina herself is the young girl of his story, and her destroyer is none other than Triogrin himself. However it is necessary to underline that Nina does not allow herself to be crushed completely. She tries to face life as best she can, and in course of time also gains in moral strength and clarity of purpose. And Yermilov' view that Nina is not the stricken seagull but the free creature soaring in the bright sunshine, deserves some attention here.

The slaughtered seagull is more strikingly a symbol of Trepliov's suicide. In act II, he tells Nina that he would soon kill himself as he has killed the bird. In Act III he attempts suicide and in Act IV he actually kills himself. Similarly in Act I he himself brings down the curtain on his unfinished play and in Act IV he brings down the curtain on the unfinished drama of his life. As the play proceeds the symbolic value of the seagull is further enriched, and in Act IV the stuffed seagull which Trigorin refuses to recognize, stands there as a grotesque symbol of his insensitive and irresponsible love affair with Nina.

Similarly the lake also becomes an all-pervasive symbol as the play proceeds. Its symbolic function in ActI, has already been discussed in relation to Trepliov's experimental drama. After the fiasco of that play when the tensions have touched a high point we hear music coming from the lake. Every one listens in silence. And after a few moments, Arkadina tells Trigorin:" Ten or fifteen years ago, you could always hear music and singing on the lake almost every night. There are six country houses around this lake. I remember such laughter and noise and shouting and love affairs. Love affairs all the time". (*The Seagull, Act I*) Arkadina's statement relates the lake to youth, gaiety, love and romance, but it also obliquely points to the decline and disintegration of the landed gentry and their charming life

style. In course of action we notice this decay and degeneration in relation to Sorin's estate, which is speedily gulped by his greedy and vulgar bailiff Shamrayev, representing the new class of bourgeoisie.

Here, another symbolic function of the lake may also be noted. As Arkandina listens to the music and remembers the colourful past associated with the lake, her feelings towards her son soften and she regrets having hurt him, and calls for him affectionately. And so we see that this "magic lake" as Dr. Dorn describes it, a little later, can still perform minor miracles. In Act I is a visible symbol of Trepliov's cosmic vision, inspired by his love for Nina. In Act II when Nina has become cold to him, he tells her: "Your growing coldness to me is frightening, it is like the lake suddenly drying up or draining away in the ground." (*The Seagull*, Act II) And here the lake is seen as related to Trepliov's creative aspirations and emotional vitality, which adds a new dimension to its symbolic value. The lake looms large in Act I and II. It is totally absent from Act III and in Act IV it is mentioned only once, when Nina tells Trepliov that she had been walking around the lake and thinking about her present worries and problems. But the charm of the lake has already faded away. And the "magic lake" that emerged as a symbol of youth, gaiety, love and creativity, now embodies the theme of evanescence of hope, passing away of time and fading away of romantic dreams.

Similarly in the last act the symbolic value of the seagull also loses its hold on the dramatic action. The seagull is mentioned several times in Nina's disturbed emotional speech. But Nina who had been sighing herself as "seagull in her letters to Trepliov, fails to convey any specific meaning through it and we fee that the symbolic function of the seagull has been exhausted. Or shall we say that life appears here as an open possibility, which, cannot be enclosed in a symbol, howsoever, complex and multidimensional it may be.

IX

And now that we are approaching the end of this discussion, a brief glance at the final scene of the play may be illuminating to clinch our argument. This scene is not as famous as the last scenes of *Three Sisters* and *Cherry Orchard* but it is profoundly meaningful and masterly in its own way and deserves greater attention than it

has received. For, here, we feel that Chekhov who has revealed his characters so acutely, is now testing the very quality of life and its deeper meaning through them. As Nina goes out in the dark, cold and stormy night, symbolizing her troubled journey of life to an uncertain destination, and Konstantin Trepliov quietly tearing the pages of his unfinished script goes to the other room to finish his life, the house party led by Arkadina fussily barges into the room and setting down in the centre stage gets engrossed in their game of cards in the candle light, and continues drinking while they play and chat. One cannot help feeling that this dimly lighted scene is a profound symbol of the life of the people who occupy the centre stage in society and blinded by their paltry success and smug security manage to evade the deeper realities of both Life and Death. *The Seagull* is truly a Dark Comedy.

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Sandhya Tripathi

THE HARVEST FESTIVAL: SEED-BED FOR FUTURE INNOVATIONS

Sean O'Casey came in the limelight with his Dublin Trilogy of which the first play, namely, *The Shadow of a Gunman*, was premiered at the Abbey in 1923. But he had earlier written three plays — *The Frost in the Flower* (1917), *The Harvest Festival*(1918) and *The Crimson in the Tricolour* (1920) — which were rejected by the Abbey directorate. Of these the first and the last named above are still untraceable and it is "unlikely that either will ever he recovered now."[1] However, luckily the manuscript of *The Harvest Festival* was acquired by the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library in 1969 and was not available to scholars until 1978. Robert Patrick Murphy has said, "I have not been able to examine *The Harvest Festival.* Lola L. Szladits, Curator of the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, considers the holograph a 'museum piece' and maintains an official policy of discouraging access by students."[2] It was first published in America in 1978 and in Ireland and Britain in 1980. It is logical, therefore, that no study on the play could be made until this time, though references to it do occur in a number of book-length studies on O'Casey's plays. But even these stray remarks on the play are made on the basis of what O'Casey himself has to say about it in his *Innisfallen Fare thee Well,*[3] and not on that of any close reading of the text. It is pertinent to notice that even seventeen years after its publication the play is yet to be performed. During his life-time O'Casey himself showed no interest in the play in his writings and correspondence; his venture to revise the play remained incomplete; only the first Act is partly revised John O'Riordan has regretted: "The dramatist himself in his meridian years never strove to promote it."[4] Even the *O'Casey Annual* and *Sean O'Casey's Review*, two major journals

aiming at promoting fresh studies and researches on the unexplored areas of O'Casey's writings, have shown singular neglect of this play. Perhaps, drawing a clue from the dramatist himself, some of the major O'Casey scholars in their studies have disparaged the play.

The earliest study of *The Harvest Festival* in some detail is an article by Ronald Ayling, entitled "Seeds for Future Harvest: Propaganda and Art in O'Casey's English Play."[5] Of the plethora of critical materials published on O'Casey two book-length studies, which devote considerable space to *The Harvest Festival*, deserve special mention. They are John O' Riordan's *A Guide to O'Casey's Plays* (1984) and Henz Kosok's *Sean O'Casey the Dramatist* (1985). All the three critics—Ayling, O'Riordan and Kosok — have focused on the autobiographical elements and on the topical subject-matter with which, as they have asserted, O'Casey was occupied during the first two and a half decades of the present century. They all declared that the play had marks of artistic immaturity. Kosok went to the extent of pronouncing that "a distinct disserviee has been done to his reputation by its publication...; it is all to their [the Abbey directors'] credit that they rejected a play like this."[6] Speaking, as it were, on behalf of the other two critics, too, mentioned above, Kosok goes on to say that it is a propaganda (in a pejorative sense) play where "plot, setting. characterization and dialogue are subordinated to its overriding propose."[7] An effort has been made in the present paper to establish that *The Harvest Festival*, far from being primarily autobiographical, topical and artistically naive and structurally inadequate, is a clear pointer to the direction O'Casey's dramaturgy was to develop in his later plays and it has a topical and at the same time a universal theme as any great drama has.

The play deals with the adequately motivated efforts of a militant labour who guides and conducts the activities of the striking labourers against economic depression and exploitation. In his struggle against the organized opposition by the exploiters, constituted of the feudal capitalists and the clergy, he is shot dead. His dead body is taken to the church for funeral service. But the vestry decides against it and the funeral cortege is diverted to the Workers' Union Hall for the workers' last prayer for the peace of

the soul of the departed leader. As the funeral procession moves to the tune of the Dead March and the song of the Red Flag, the church bell rings to announce the commencement of the Harvest Festival. Even this bare plot outline demonstrates that the deeper thematic burden of the play is universal: it is a conflict between the instinct for survival, which has been always basic to the human existential issue, and the opposing, thwarting and negative forces represented here by the combined might of the unmerciful church and the exploiting, unscrupulous lot of blood-suckers, the capitalists. The unholy alliance of the church nd the capitalist is a metaphor for a mighty, insurmountable force which foils the efforts of the individual to survive decently, and eventually destroys the protagonist who is a representative of alarger chunk of humanity. If we had not had the knowledge of O'Casey's associations with and sympathy for the exploited working class to which he himself belonged, our attention to the metaphoric connotation would have been drawn more easily. The stuff of the play is, no doubt, taken from the contemporary Irish social history. But then all great literary compositions are rooted in their indigenous raw materials. It is theuse of the indigenous material metaphorically which raises that work of art to the level of universality.

If we examine the blanket epithet of a 'naturalist' attributed to O'Casey we may have some difficulty in calling him a topical dramatist with a propagandist bias, as has been asserted by Ronald Ayling. We may not even concur with Robert Hogan's generalized statement that there is a new orientation in O'Casey's technique "in the direction of freedom, of breaking down the forms and conventions of dramatic realism" from *The Plough and the Stars* onwards.[8] This is because even long before declaring his anti-naturalistic stance,[9] O'Casey was naturally inclined towards non-naturalistic treatment of his allegedly topical corpus in a way that his plays acquire wider signification. In his earliest work available to us — *The Harvest Festival* — he has used non-naturalistic devices, such as symbolism, Brechtian ' alienation,' mythicisation, and a deliberate Chekhovian disconnectedness and looseness of structure. We have stated above how O'Casey's patently topical, autobiographical and factual material has been treated in such an artistic manner that it acquires a universal significance.

So far as structure and characterization are concerned, *The Harvest Festival* demonstrates strong naturalistic strains, no doubt. The looseness of the structure and certain disjointedness and formlessness of it can legitimately give cause for regrets by critics. The static nature of character-portrayal and the identifiably typical dramatic personae of the play, alongwith the presentation of a 'slice-of-life' with empathy tilting on the side of the sufferers and the exploited, do qualify this play for being thoroughly naturalistic. But if we closely examine these very elements which entitle the play to the status of a naturalistic drama, we will have no difficulty in discerning that these elements are subtly treated in such a way that they retain their facade and superficial flavour of a naturalistic drama. But at the same time they are, in a highly suggestive manner, imbued with non-naturalistic signification to widen the semantic dimension of the play. For example, the disjointedness of the play's structure is conducive to the creation of montages to focus our attention more pointedly on crucial issues dealt with in the play. The most human character in the play, Mrs. Rocliffe, mother of the protagonist of the play (i.e. Jack), has been mythicised; in her resemblance with and echo of Synge's Maurya in *Riders to the Sea* she stands for the suffering and loss of all the bereaved mothers of the world. She is the only character who elicits our empathy while all the other characters are presented naturalistically but with a strong anti-naturalistic blending with Brechtian 'Verfremdung.' There is a striking parallelism between even the early O'Casey and Chekhov, and between O'Casey's distrust of naturalistic empathy and Brecht's *Verfremdung*, long before the theory of 'alienation' was explicitly stated by the latter.

Ronald Ayling takes great pains in establishing the naturalistic structure of *The Harvest Festival*. He points out the structural deficiencies of the plot of the play thus: "The Festival is something of an empty and contrived framework for the dramatic action and is seldom meaningfully related to it. It is artificially grafted on to the plot... a clumsy device... not skillfully integrated in the course of the action with the social strife and the socialist hero's martyrdom."[10] In fact, Ayling's regrets prove our point that O'Casey was not interested in toeing in with the conventional

looseness, disjointedness and certain irrelevances of the plot are a deliberate resolve in the direction of non-naturalistic representation which becomes explicit in his *Within the Gates. The Harvest Festival* has a close structural affinity with Chekhov's non-naturalistic play, *The Three Sisters* where the dramatist uses an exterior action (i.e. journey to Moscow), in the manner of O'Casey's action dealing with the celebration of the annual festival, within whose framework a number of interior actions, without explicit causal connections, are presented. The exterior action of *The Harvest Festival* may be apparently inconsequential, but it has symbolic implications on which contrast, irony and satire hinge. It also offers opportunities to present the different characters' feelings, emotional and intellectual responses and their attitudes to the various thematic issues.

The main thread of the interior action is the conflict between militant labour and economic system. The minor strands are the mother-son relationship, the Rector's and Labour hero's influence with each other, the sacrifice of a comrade-in-arm's long-loved habit of drinking, the issue of the scabs *vis-a-vis* the striking labourers, the church and its vestry's attitude to the masses and the internal dissension within the institution of the church itself. These minor issues throw light on each other, as well as contribute to the complexity of the apparently simple-looking main issue of the plot. All these threads are presented through juxtaposition and contrast which operate in the different dramaturgical components of the play and produce the required structural tension to hold the play. These major and minor strands of the plot, together, constitute the topical, societal entity comprising the bourgeoisie, the proletarian, and the clergy. But these social constituents are not so much presented for naturalistic, representational and propagandist purpose, as Ronald Ayling would like us to accept, but as a convenient artistic framework to project human feelings, attitudes, and existential issues in circumstances which are hostile to human endeavour for freedom, equity, and justice. The ideas contained in the play may appear as O'Casey's early communistic leaning but to read propagandist intention in the play is hardly tenable in

the face of its paramount human interest.

By way of establishing our point of view — i.e. O'Casey's deliberate use of a loose structure for artistic advantage — we can briefly comment on the first Act of the play, which has attracted Kosok's adverse criticism. The Act opens with a conversation about the imminent Harvest Festival. The conversation suddenly shifts to the on-going strike by the labourers. No causal hints have been given in the opening situation for bringing in unrelated issues. Kosok naturally regrets O'Casey's long, rambling exposition which the whole of the first Act is. But this alleged long, rambling first Act, presenting only the conventional exposition of the play, serves a significant artistic purpose. Here the bits of exposition are spread over the entire first Act so that the gaps are utilized for an effective focusing of the Kaleidoscopic apparatus on the feelings and attitudes of the different characters. Thus, the events connected with the Festival and the strike become metaphors or a symbolic framework for projecting human issues rather than the political or religious ones.

Besides the artistically desirable disconnectedness and rambling nature of the plot movement, we discern another non-naturalistic device in the very first Act of the play, i.e. Brechtian *Verfemdung*. For example, our sympathies for Tom and Mrs Williamson were held in alliance in the opening situation of the act because of their caricatured presentation. But later in the situation our sympathies for Tom flow because of his essentially human approach to the basic problems of life, but are quickly reversed when Jack towards the end of the Act sums up his Catholic character: "Poor Tom, you suffer under a dual tyranny — afraid of your soul in the next world and afraid of your body in this."[11] At the same time our possible endorsement to Jack's heartless communism, which may be built up even on the debris of individualism and human feelings, remains in a state of suspended animation. In the first Act Jack's idealism, because of its negative human consideration and being contrasted with Tom's down-to-earth rootedness in humanity, though not without self-centredness, fails to elicit our empathy. But later in the play we find our response reversed in his relationship with and attitude to his mother and toBill, his comrade-in-arms. This technique of 'alienation' and

'reverse-alienation' is more explicitly exploited in *The Plough and the Stars*.

Our intention in the present paper is not to defend all the structural and thematic weaknesses of the play. We only propose to point out that this earliest available O'Casey play is like a seed-bed for a number of innovative dramatic devices which he uses in his later plays. Besides the use of rambling and disjointed structuring of the dramatic action, irrelevancies, 'alienation,' and montage, *The Harvest Festival* uses other devices, too, such as simultaneity of events of different nature and import, the blending of auditory and visual effects for artistic economy and effectiveness, and exploitation of colour arrangement. A clear example of irrelevancy as a structural expedience is discernible in Jack's long and rather too rounded speeches about socialism, workers' abject submissiveness, and the poverty-ridden, unhygeinic and almost hellish conditions of tenement life.[12] This may appear undramatic, especially when we recall a similar practice of Shaw in whose long dialogues an idea is debated which causes friction and motion in the plot. This deficiency can be partly explained with reference to O'Casey's early enthusiasm for his explicit courtship with communism and partly because the play is undeniably a drama of ideas. There are several other examples where the clues for Jack's communistic tirades are rather feeble.

To illustrate O'Casey's use of double stage and blending of auditory and visual effects we can cite the simultaneous celebration of the Harvest Festival and the chanted offering of prayer for the peace of the soul of the departed labour leader, taking place in two different locales, which anticipates the last, powerful situation in *The Plough and the Stars* where the 'imprisoned' tenement inmates' playing of the game of cards, the tuck-tuck of the boots of the marching soldiers on the street and the distant portion of the town glowing with high-rising flames go on simultaneously. The other notable example, even in a relatively less significant situation, is thus: During the serious discussion between Bishopson and Jack, Mrs. Williamson has been arranging and admiring the heap of vegetables of different colours on the table, singing in a low but perfectly audible voice lines of a hymn, the message of which - kindness and charity — is at variance with her and her

clan's conduct and attitudes. This device of the simultaneity of disparate happenings, so artistically exploited by O'Casey in his later plays, hinges on juxtaposition and contrast, so crucial for his dramaturgy.

Kosok's regret that there is "an easy wavering between realistic and unrealistic presentation in plot,"[13] has considerable justification, no doubt. Even the second Act, like the First one, begins in a rambling manner and is in the nature of a repeat exposition, with information about the protagonist, the strikers' conflict and its impact upon the life of the non-participating dependents in the workers' families. Besides stuffing these pieces of information in an undramatic manner, there is considerable autobiographical stuff appearing as conscious, deliberate and quite often laboured. For example, Jack's habit of voracious reading his lack of formal schooling, his boyhood interest in the masses of the church and eventual withdrawal from the church activities, loving care of his courageous mother who never submitted to hardships, etc. - all explicitly autobiographical - do not contribute much to the development of the main issues of the play. Besides this, we have unwarranted, lengthy conversations (e.g. Mrs. Rocliffe with Mrs. Duffy, later with the Rector) and causally unconnected deposing of information which stall the development of the dramatic action. However, in the midst of this rambling stuff we have, interspersed, highly dramatically significant utterances and situations which propel the action as well as lend emotional solidity to an otherwise dry play of ideas. In this regard we can refer to Mrs. Rocliffe's apprehension at Jack's impetuous and impulsive nature which makes his accidental death credible. "He's such a hasty boy and he doesn't care what he says."[14] Another example which it is relevant to mention here is Mrs. Rocliffe's Manrya-like (ef. Synge's *Riders to the Sea*) premonitions about some imminent catastrophe: "I feel as if there was somethin' terrible goin' to happen."[15] As Mrs. Rocliffe's affinity with Maurya is unmistaken so is Jack's with Bartley.[16] We can similarly determine the Rector's affinity (with his pious consolation) with Synge's Priest in *Riders to the Sea* who tries to explain away, like the Rector, the mother's intuitive perception of the destruction of her son. O'Casey shows his indebtedness to Synge here in his naturalistic exploitation of the

human situation so that the dryness of the play of ideas is somewhat moistened. However, O'Casey has widened the perceptual scope of Maurya in attributing to Mrs. Rocliffe's perception another dimension, i.e. Juno-like (ef. *Juno and the Paycock*) realisation of the futility of exclusive dependence upon God, so succinctly stated in her, "what can God do again't the stupidity of man."

We notice early in O'Casey's dramaturgy the exploitation of non-verbal devices to convey the sense of, for example, chaos by mixing auditory visual elements: commotion created by the strikes and the scabs, the shots of solders' guns and Mrs. Duffy's eye-witness account, visualizing the rampaging scene.[17] The use of the simultaneity of disparate happenings to underscore ironic and satiric effects is a technique which O'Casey employs in a number of his mature plays. By the close of the Second Act the play has, in fact, ended. The church bell announcing the beginning of the Harvest Festival — which in any way is not a thematic or structural concern of the play — and the death of the leader of the workers' Union are the concluding events of the Act. In the death of Jack the catastrophe, both at the political and personal levels, has occurred. Both the workers and Mrs. Rocliffe are left to suffer their destiny. Nothing remains to hold out any hope to redeem them. In such a situation the third Act, which does not have any thematic or structural causation, is only in the nature of an anti-climax. It can at most elaborate some of the ideas and contrasts already presented. This is why the stuff of the final Act tends to be structurally independent of that of the earlier Acts. It has its own exposition complication and conclusion. Looking at this Act like this would lead us to conclude that the story of the earlier Acts seems to constitute a background, as it were, to the final Act which is the drama of the play.

Ronald Ayling, perhaps the most influential critic of O'Casey's works, has tried to show O'Casey's artistic immaturity in *The Harvest Festival* mainly on three counts: viz. lack of functional tension between dramatic personae and artificial pattern of action; oratorical rather than dramatic dialogue, lacking in give and take; and caricatured characterisation which is not convincing. The trouble with O'Casey critics of *The Harvest Festival* has been that

since it is his first play it should of necessity, be immature, especially in view of O'Casey's lack of formal schooling and existence in an economically hard-pressed environment. My purpose in the present paper, as stated earlier, is not to defend the artistic deficiencies of the play — there are quite a few of them, no doubt, — but to assert that we should not close our eyes to the early innovative dramatic instinct of the playwright, which blossomed significantly in his later plays. If we adopt such a liberal and open-minded critical stance, we will notice that the rambling nature of the plot-structure, caricatured characterization, disjointedness, and abrupt changes in situations, issues discussed, and grouping of characters, are rather deliberate and in the direction of O'Casey's inclination towards non-naturalistic theatre long before he formally declared his hostility to naturalism.

On close examination of the play, we should have no difficulty in establishing that the alleged deficiencies here are deliberate. They demonstrate O'Casey's efforts from the very beginning for innovation. O'Casey was neither interested in presenting an organized and logically developed main plot with the other sub-plots subordinated to it, nor was he concerned with the psychological exploration of characters based on causal relationship in the conventional dramatic mode. The play should not be taken as primarily concerned with the discussion of a social or political problem; that would certainly require a conventional, realistic structural framework of exposition, debate and conclusion. The play's intention is different. It intends to dramatically present the attitudes and feelings of diverse characters involved in different situations. Such a dramatic intention would require the use of a kaleidoscopic technique and deliberate disconnectedness. Once this pattern is recognized, the alleged feeble tension between the strikers and the scabs, between the church and Jack, and Mrs. Duffy's dissociation from her good neighbour, can easily be understood.

The other stock criticism against *The Harvest Festival* is its oratorial dialogue. In fact, the dialogue here is not so much oratorical rhetoric as it is stylized, which is a pointer to O'Casey's non-naturalistic use of the language. It is mostly Jack's speeches which invite Ayling's rather harsh indictment that the "Stylized

speech often sticks out like a sore thumb."[18] In fairness to O'Casey it can be asserted that Jack's wide-reading, intellectual sharpness and sense of conviction make his allegedly oratorical speeches convincing and the lack of much give and take is dictated by the dramatic intention of not so much developing a plot as projecting certain attitudinal points of view. Moreover, non-naturalistic handling of dramatic material requires certain amount of deviation from the normal interactional speech idiom. It is true that O'Casey's dialogues sometimes are inconsequential from a strictly dramatic point of view. But this tendency, characteristic of the Absurdist technique, is O'Casey's conscious experimentation with technique and contingent upon the thematic intention of the play.

Both Kosok and Ayling have found fault with O'Casey's characterisation in *The Harvest Festival*. Kosok asserts that here characters are mostly allegorical abstractions,[19] while Ayling feels that they "are painted in black and white colours and thereby become caricatures lacking conviction either as human beings or as credible representatives of particular vested interests."[20] This is too sweeping a generalization. In *The Harvest Festival* the major characters - Jack, Mrs. Rocliffe, and Rector Jennings — are individualised humans. Even though they do not have much psychological complexity, they have considerable strength of personality and convictions. However, characters like Mr. and Mrs. Bishopson are certainly caricatured, but this too, has been done deliberately to offer a contrast with the other characters endowed with human feelings.

By way of summing up we can say that O'Casey's handling of the different dramaturgical components in *The Harvest Festival*— plot, theme, characterization, dialogue — look forward to their subtler and more artistic use in his later plays. Some of the significant technical devices, howsoever, crudely used, and matured later are: O'Casey's deliberate use of loose plot structure to give his kaleidoscopic focusing adequate freedom of operation; his distrust of naturalistic empathy (ef. Brechtian *verfremdung*); application of what he said later in his career: "even in the most commonplace of realistic plays the symbol can never be absent;"[21] inclusion of the comic, the farcical, and the melodramatic into the serious and the tragic; juxtaposition and contrast; focus on human attitudes

and feelings rather than on discreetly structured events; stylization, deliberate disconnectedness, occasional abstraction and inconsequential communication — pointing to a tendency for Absurdism, expressionism, etc.

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[9]See Sean O'Casey, *The Green Crow* (W.H. Allen, London, 1957), p.83.
[10]"Propaganda and Art in O'Casey's Earliest Play," *Irish Literary Review*, x(1980), p.26.
[11]*The Complete Plays of Sean O'Casey*, vol.5 (Macmillan, London, 1984), p.420.
[12]*Ibid.*, pp.424-25.
[13]*O'Casey,The Dramatist*, p.13.
[14]*The Complete Plays of O'Casey*, vol.5., p.436.
[15]*Ibid.*, p.437.
[16]*Ibid.*, pp.445-46.
[17]*Ibid.*, p.449.
[18]"The Seeds for Future Harvest," p.33.
[19]Kosok, *op.cit.*, p.11.
[20]"Seeds for Future Harvest," p.35.
[21]*The Green Crow*, p.83.

A.A. Ansari

THE POETRY OF W.B. YEATS

The poetic career of W.B. Yeats covers a span of nearly fifty years : his earliest collection of lyrical poems, *Crossways*, came out in 1889, and the *Last Poems* were published in 1939. It is a story of steady and continuous growth, the poetry goes on adding new dimensions to itself and remains in full control of a sensitive intelligence almost till the end. In one of his later utterances Yeats refers to himself as beloning to the tribe of the "last Romantics," and it has ben alleged aginst him that for quite long he does not abandon the Romantic simpliflication of emotions. Brought up, through his father, on the tradition of the pre-Rephaelite painters, and owing deep allegiance to the Victorian romantics, Yeats's early peoms are fragile in texture and emotionally only half-baked. More often than not the naivety of his feelings is stained by a Keatsian colour and resonance. The immediate stimulus for these poems is provided by themes drawn from Ossianic or Irish mythology or that folklore which was part and parcel of the mental make-up of the peasantry. Yeats's dream world at this stage is private, personal and very literary: it is inhabited by 'cloud-pale', 'dream-heavy', passion-ridden maidens, and the epithets—'pale', 'shadowy', 'desolate', 'glamobous', 'dim' — which occur frequently, contribute to its pervasive atmosphere. The poems of this period are characterized by hazy and nebulous effects, langorous overtones and expansive and enervating rhythms. The lush and merely picturesque details of an exotic kind are the result partly of his stay with his grand-parents in the Sligo countryside, and partly of the cloying and decadent romantic idiom. But it needs to be emphasized that the melancholy in these poems is not modish but reflects the characteristic Irish attitude towards the mystery of Nature. The nostalgic sadness derives from an imagined world which the poet would like to recapture but which has a precious

little chance of survival.

Though in the very next volume, *The Rose* (1893) Yeats seems to go, generally speaking, beyond the thinness and inadequacy of his earlier manner "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" is not as pure a crystal as it is often made out to be. Thoreau's *Walden* is the immediate literary stimulus behind it — and he dreamt of living in search of wisdom. That as well as the desire for freedom and peace constitute the dominating motifs and determine its pervasive atmosphere :

> And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow.
> Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
> There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow.
> And evening full of the linnet's wings.

Charming though these lines are yet the power of the mind to keep the senses under its control does not come through, and the tension between nature and the human imagination is also lacking in it. Otherwise the poems in this volume are marked by a complexity of attitude and a sense of compacted form. "The Sorrows of Love" is a case in point : here the chaos of man's world and the harmony induced by Nature are juxtaposed the one against the other. The romantic framework is still there but it is now given a new dramatic and sensuous body. Even at this early stage Yeats seems to be groping toward a symbolism constructed out of natural objects, and this contributes to the process of concrete realization in many poems. Birds, trees,sun, moon, streams and other objects come to acquire a symbolic status, and continue to grow as nuclei of metaphorical richness later. "The Two Trees" is a fine illustration of the way in which the associations of the two Scriptual trees have been pressed into the service of the development of emotions. "Adam's Curse" deserves special mention: it begins with a consideration of the three parallel labours of the poet, the beautiful woman and the lover in employing technique for purposes of converting the chaos of life into order. In the last two stanzas, however, the poem modulates into a poised, though poignant, awareness of the ruinous impact of Time on love. The fading of happiness before the onrush of years has been formalized by the image of the hollow moon:

We sat grown quiet at the name of love;
We saw the last embers of daylight die,
And in the trembling blue green of the sky
A moon, worn as if it had been a shell
Washed by time's waters as they rose and fell
About the stars and broke in days and years.
I had a thought for no one's but your care:
That you were beautiful, and that I strove
To love you in the old high way of love;
That it had all seemed happy,and yet we'd grown
As weary-hearted as that hollow moon.

Here Yeats sems to have outgrown the excesses of his self-indulgent romanticism and the reference to 'the old high way of love' is a pointer to the ideal of aristrocratic grace and detachment which was so deeply cherished by him. And the image of the "hollow moon" reminds us of the dropping of the moon behind the cottage roof in Wordsworth's famous poem ("Strange fits of passion have I known") where it strikes a definitely ominous note.

With the publication of *The Rose* (1893) and *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899) Yeats's use of symbolic language becomes very much pronounced. Yeats's patriotism was reflected in its early phase in toying with the deeds of the mythological heroes like Fergus, Conchubar, Cachulain and others. This preoccupation provided him with a bulwark against the mere dreaminess that had been induced in him by the aesthetic cult. The symbolic rose may have entered Yearts's poetry under the influence of the Platonism of Spenser and Shelley. But besides being a symbol of spiritual love and physical beauty, it also becomes a symbol of the hopes and aspirations evoked by Ireland. In one of the poems in the last-mentioned volume Yeats exploits the full potential of the symbol for political ends:

I, too, await
The hour of thy great wind of love and hate,
When shall the stars be blown about the sky
Like the sparks blown out of a smithy, and die?
Surely thine hour has come, thy great wind blows,
Far-off, most secret, and inviolate Rose!

With *Responsibilities* (1914) the world of shimmmering beauty and languid airs is left far behind; it is replaced by one of a more secure anchorage, of greater solidity and substance. One such example is provided by "The Cold Heaven":

> Suddenly I saw the cold and rook-delighting heaven
> That seemed as though ice burned and was but the more ice,
> And thereupon imagination and heart were driven
> So wild that every casual thought of that and this
> Vanished, and left but memories, that should be out of season
> With the hot blood of youth, of love crossd long ago;
> And I took all the blame out of all sense and reason,
> Until I cried and trembled and rocked to and fro,
> Riddled with light.

Here the winged and burning passion of youth and the freezing naked soul of the old man are juxtaposed against each other with little care for virtuosity. The framework of the basic contrariety between the two is provided by the image of simple, elemental things. It is the laying bare of the hidden tension with a sleight of hand. Not a word or image is in excess or out of its righful place, and the emotional tone is muted. And yet one cannot help perceive how the intimate personal moment has been arrested and has issued in an arched flight of ulterance. Yeats's poetry also becomes weighted with a social and political awareness. It ceases to be iridescent and incantatory, it becomes spare, sinewy and athletic. The grim and ominous drama of Ireland's struggle for emancipation from the yoke of English tyranny and oppression begins to cast its shadows over Yeats's poetry. Yeats's pantheon is now constituted not by the heroes of a remote mythological past but by those of contemporary history and the theme of martyrdom becomes a recurrent one. The figure of the isolated hero or heroine looms large in Yeats's political poetry.

"To a Shade," addressed to Parnell, is a case in point. In this poem Yeats inveighed against ingratitude towards the benefactors of the country —- Parnell as well as Lone —-, for it is evident that the people who matter 'are at their old tricks yet'. Lone was as much opposed by Murphy as Parnell had been though Lane was the one who had brought

In his full hands what, had they only known,
Had given their children's children loflier thought.
Sweeter emotion, working in their veins
Like gentle blood.

Parnell and Lane reaped an identical load of disgrace, ignominy and revilement and hence Parnell had better seek his own niche of safe oblivion:

Go, unquiet wanderer,
And gather the Glasnevin coverlet
About your head till the dust stops your ear,...
You had enough of sorrow before death-
Away, away! You are safer in the tomb.

Maud Gonne,who may be treated as hovering over the entire range of his poetry, becomes the chief character in the poems of middle years. "Easter 1916" and "On A Political Prisoner" are two of the important poems which reflect this seething and intense consciousness born out of Yeats's plunge into the whirlpool of Irish politics. Yeats fought hard and long for the establishment of a free Irish Republic which could provide scope for the emergence of a new mode of existence. Deeply moved by the Easter Dublin riots of 1916 Yeats immortalized the spontaneous upsurge of a whole people into enduring verse. The sacrifices of these heroes and heroines of Ireland may not have brought the realization of their dream any nearer, but certainly the 'casual comedy' of life has been the image of the living stream — the world of change and action and that of the stone — the single unchanging object in the midst of flux. Here it may be added that Yeats is at once wedded to the ideal of political emancipation as well as apprehensive of what it may bring in its wake. In "Meditations in Time of Civil War" he expresses his pre-vision of the revolutionary violence which may sweep away the symbols of a traditional culture — symbols which:

Give place to an indifferent multitude, give place
To brazen hawks, nor self-delighting reverie,
Nor hate of what's to come, nor pity for what's gone,
Nothing but grip of claw, and the eye's complacency,

The innumerable clanging wings that have put out the moon,

In other words war is viewed both as signalling the end of a particular phase of the country's history and that of a cherished mode of life. The paradox, therefore,lies in its being evocative of Anglo-Ireland as well as preparing for the withering away of that sense of pride and ideal of fine living which constitute Yeats's norm of aristocracy.

But love and politics, though important ingredients in Yeats's total personality as poet, are equally balanced by his prophetic vision which is so much in evidece in the later poems.Yeats came to reject the science of Huxley and Tyndall in favour of the autonomy of the imagination — "the infallible church of poetic tradition"— just as Blake, one of the greatest of his masters had done earlier while repudiating the empiricism and mechanical raionalism of Bacon, Newtom and Lock. He quickly outgrew the phase of Celtic twilight. He was now faced with the task of systematizing his own thinking in the from of an alternative mythology. This he succeeded in adumbrating in *A Vision* (1924). The basic formula is provided by the two predilections co-present in all of us — the objective and the moral as opposed to the subjective and the aesthetic. The former connotes the primary self which must find its complement in the buried energies,called the Mask. There seems to be some equivalence here, though not exact and rigid, between these Yeatsian categories and Blake's concept of the Spectre and the Emanation, and in both cases it is the basic antinomies present in the human mind which are thus represented. The tendency to renounce one's normal and habitual self, to walk into its opposite and to assume the theatrical pose the lack of which Yeats deplores in the moral universe of Wordsworth is a quality which the artist shares with the mystic and the saint. Yeats seems to be in full agreement with Blake who declares in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* : "Without contraries is no progression". The mechanism of the Primary and the Antithetical self or Mask may be understood in terms of the intersecting cones of a gyre. They are also solar and lunar in character, rspectively. It has been usefully pointed out by Cleanth Brooks that in the poem "Blood and the Moon", moon is the symbol of the pure imagination which is played off against

blood — the symbol of the active and objective force. A subtle variation of this theory of the Mask is presented in the notion of the great wheel, the various spokes of which correspond to the phases of the moon which are twenty eight in number. Phase I, being the dark of the moon, corresponds to pure objectivity, whereas phase 15, representing the full moon, is comparable to subjectivity at its highest point. Both these states are impossible to visualize and human beings by and large fall into distinct categories according to the varying degrees of intermixture. The phases of the moon not only determine the different types of personality but also help us understand the different cycles of incarnation each of us is likely to undergo within the course of our life-span. And not only individual human beings but civilizations also move within cycles according to the mutations of the moon. This bears a close resemblance to Spengler's theory of history, according to which civilizations run through cycles of two-thousand odd years and pass through the stages of growth, maturity and decline. Yeats thinks that the Christian epoch belongs to the primary phase whereas the Graeco-Roman civilization is related to the antithetical. According to his calculation we are at the moment within the 23rd phase of the moon and heading towards darkness and extinction.

The last-mentioned point has important consequences. Yeats's later poems have as their dominant motif the sense of disorder and chaos which has entered the life of the individual as well as an entire epoch. It may not be idle to surmise that the vision of horror reflected in the first part of "The Second Coming" may have been stimulated by the cataclysmic happenings associated with the after-math of the First World War. The hair-raising, primitive, fascinated horror evoked by the radical dislocation of things and the unbridled fury of mire and passion finds an eloquent voice in Yeats:

> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned.

It may be added in parenthesis that "ceremony of innocence" is a

fine Yeats-Blake compound: ce·emony, as in a later context, too, symbolizes the vestiges of order Yeats found at Coole Park, and innocence, in the Blakean sense, opposes the social and sexual violence unleashed by the blood-dimmed tide. A fine example of the coalescence of homely imagery and the haunting sense of desolation evoked by the war occurs in "Meditations in Time of Civil War:"

> May this laborious stair and this stark tower
> Become a roofless ruin that the owl
> May build in the cracked masonry and cry
> Her desolation to the desolate sky.

It may be added that "The Magi" and "The Second Coming", though they ostensibly have their source in the traditional Christian imagery, do not lend themselves to a Christian interpretation. In fact the paradoxical thing about the two poems is that they do not imply a return to primitive Christianity as an antidote to the present "scientific, democratic, fact-accumulating, heterogeneous civilization " which has led to the chaos and anarchy facing us today. The existent phase of industrial and scientific progress, with a materialistic basis and a valueless system seems to herald the reversal of the world's gyre and give birth to a sort of violent, bestial anti-civilization. Putting it in the esoteric terminology of *A Vision* we have travelled pretty close to the dark of the moon, and this may usher in phases of greater and more impenetrable darknes:

> The darkness drops again; but now I know
> That twenty centuries of stony sleep
> Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
> And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
> Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

From the stance of paganism, the annunciation of the Christian dispensation ---- the First Coming so to say ---- was like the introduction of "a fabulous, formles darkness":

> In pity for man's darkening thought

He walked that room and issued thence
In Galilean turbulence;
The Babylonian starlight brought
A fabulous, formless darkness in.

But situated as we are at present on the specific point of the lunar cycle, we are on the verge of a return to the undifferentiated chaos of the womb from where we had started.

The Tower (1928) and *The Winding Stair* (1933) represent the high watermark of Yeats's accomplishment as poet. In "The Tower", Leavis acutely remarks,Yeats achieves a ripeness in disillusion. The poem falls into three distinct sections, the first one of which is concerned with the conflict between active imagination and the fading nature. Yeats concedes that

Never had I more
Excited, passionate, fantastical
Imagination, nor an ear and eye
That more expected the impossible

And this inspite of

Decrepit age that has been tied to me
As to a dog's tail?

His imagination that has acquired the sharpness of steel seems to be pitted against the fraying edges of nature — 'a sort of battered kettle at the heel.' In the second section Yeats continues to feel a rage against old age as in the preceding section, too. Here he apparently seems to draw upon the grotesque fascination of the folklore but Hanrahan is in reality Yeats's own antithetical self.

And I myself created Hanrahan.

This section registers the conflict between imagination on the one hand and the unfading self of the poet propped up by images on the other. These are stored up in the Great Memory, and one of these images, it needs hardly to be stressed,is that of Maud Gonne — the object of intense love and adoration. It is a memory of

'woman lost' rather than of 'woman won' - one of fustration rather than of flulfilment. And when memroy of such a loss is awakened and vivified, it has the effect of blotting out the sun's reality and substituting for it lunar insanities:

> And that if memory recur, the sun's
> Under eclipse and the day blotted out.

In the third section Yeats becomes conscious, like Hanrahan, of the failure to attain unity of being. Besides, it is also packed full with an over-flowing patriotic sentiment —- a kind of drumbeating as also an exaltation of Anglo-Irish partialities and loyalties :

> I choose upstanding men....
> They shall inherit my pride,
> The pride of people that were
> Bound neither to Cause nor to State,

No less prominent is Yeats's own striking of attitudes which is brought out in assertions like these:

> I mock Plotinus' thought
> And cry in Plato's teeth,
> Death and life were not
> Till man made up the whole,
> Made lock, stock and barrel
> Out of his bitter soul,
> Aye, sun and moon and star, all,
> And further add to that
> That, being dead, we rise,
> Dream and so create
> Translunar Paradise.

But this section need not be dismissd, contrary to what has been done by Harold Bloom as the mere effusion of a bloated ego or as the mere froth of patriotic sentiment. Yeats, it may be pointed out, continues to be intrigued by the problem of artistic creation and that of triumphing over the decrepitude of the body by uttering his last song. The artist creates poems and paintings as undeliberately as the birds build their nests —- prompted by some kind of inner,

istinctive urge :

As at the loophole there
The daws chatter and scream,
And drop twigs layer uopn layer.
When they have mounted up,
The mother bird will rest
On their hollow top,
And so warm her wild nest.

And the triumph of the artistic imagination over the intractable material of life as also over the persistent harrassment to which human beings are subjected is brought out thus:

Now shall I make my soul,
Compelling it to study
In a leamed school
Till the wreck of the body,
Slow decay of blood,
Testy delirium,
Or dull decrepitude,
Or what worse evil come...
Seem but the clouds of the sky
When the horizon fades :
Or a birds's sleepy cry
Among the deepening shades.

Of the two Byzantium poems "Sailing to Byzantium" was written four years earlier than "Byzantium" in August-September, 1926. The two elements that are constantly held in tension are the "sensual music" on the one hand and the "artifice of Eternity" on the other. The first three stanzas of the poem, generally speaking, oscillate between these two poles till in the last one Yeats declares unequivocally :-

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake.

The tree of gold, with artificial birds in it, is symbolic, as Yeats

himself informs us, "of the intellectual joy of Eternity as contrasted with the instinctive joy of human life". And it may be added that the devoted and strenuous labour that goes into the making of the bird reminds us very strongly of Blake's emblematical Tyger :.

> What the hammer? What the chain?
> In what furnace was thy brain?
> What the anvil? What dread grasp
> Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

This is how the elemental and exuberant energy is turned and twisted and given a specific, though terrible, form. Byzantium, which was formerly "the centre of European civilization and the source of its intellectual philosophy, " becomes in the context of the poem — very much like Blake's Golgonooza — not only symbolic of man's mind but of that fullness of life which is to be achieved when man's involvement into the vortex of naturalism is done away with. What Yeats is mainly concerned with in the poem is the search for the *daimon* at the centre of the unity of Being. It may be held with Harold Bloom that the repudiation of nature by Yeats has not the Blakean stance about it. The monuments of unaging intellect that are contained within Byzantium are really images of the magnificence of the human soul. In "God's holy fire" the creator is absorbed into creation and does not stand aloof, unconcerned and apathetic. The quest of the soul, it is underscored, is not away from the body but from the decrepitude that it implies and entails necessarily. The necessity of purgation is underlined all through the poem, and this purgation amounts not to an avoidance of all those ills that the mortal framework is subject to but reflects the necesssity of being rendered free from the Blakean Spectre or selfhood. For until that freedom is achieved the human identity - the real macrocosm of personality — cannot come into its own and achieve its specific kind of uniqueness. *Byzantium*, written in 1930, L.C. Knights argues, while verbally echoing Leavis, has a less tight organization than the earlier poem. Even if it be so, it has a greater density and many more layers of meaning than the earlier Byzantium poem. About both the poems Whitaker makes an incisive comment to the effect that "in each poem the speaker

moves on his winding path or whirlpool----turning toward the timeless, through the sea of generation toward the condition of fire, which descends to meet him by way of its own gyre or winding path." The poem proceeds with the distinction between the unpurged images of the day and the purged images of the night. The image of the dome---- the image of Eternity scorning or outshining the human -- is pervasive in the poem. The 'dying animal' of *Sailing to Byzantium* becomes here

> All that man is,
> All mere complexities,
> The fury and the mire of human veins,

'God's holy fire' is transmuted into

> At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit
> Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,
> Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,
> Where blood-begotten spirits come
> And old complexities of fury leave,

'Complexity' is a recurrent word in the poem and denotes, as William Empson puts it succinctly, "the knotted cords of passion that tie us to one life." The idea of purgation suggested in the foregoing lines through the mysterious flames is common to both the poems. Spirits have to be purged in order to be reborn. and the process of purgation is coalesced with the image of the dance which in Yeats is always associated with controlled energy and an intricate pattern. It is also to be noticed that the golden bird of the earlier poem is replaced by the "cocks of Hades" which may incite the spirits to be reborn and shed the gross habiliment of the body. The dolphins, which Empson wittily calls the "all-purpose transport animals", carry the spirits over to the Supreme Heaven. The focal theme, announced early in the poem, is contained in the phrase, "unwind the winding path." This is prepared for by "Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth" where the Mummy is undoubtedly to be equated with Death, the summoner. The "winding path" is obviously the mazy track of experience -- the spool which has to be unwound in the super-human or supra-sensual world. The five closing lines

of the poem:

> Marbles of the dancing floor
> Break bitter furies of complexity,.
> Those images that yet
> Fresh images beget,
> That dolphin torn,that gong-tormented sea.

are an epitome of the entire poem. Here marbles break bitter furies, images and the sea, and this breaking implies casting away of what is merely human and natural. It also implies an act of transcendence of what is gross, temporal and bound up with the terrestial world. One who is able to transcend these is likely to enter the realm of the perfect, static and changeless artifacts and experiences. The rare distinction of the poem lies in the fact that depending heavily on Yeats's system as it does, it is in no way subservient to it.

Of the later poems mention may also be made of "Lapis Lazuli" the poem written about the medallion given to Yeats by Henry Clifton, and it inevitably recalls to mind Keats's Grecian Urn — an art object on the frieze of which are carved figures that are exciting to the imagination. The poem centres round "the argument against nature and the social order" and Yeats has commented upon it thus :

> ..... a great piece carved by some Chinese sculptor into the semblance of a mountain with temple, trees, paths and an Ascetic and pupil about to climb the mountain. Ascttic, pupil, hard stone, are eternal theme of the sensual east. The heroic cry in the midst of despair. But no, I am wrong, the east has its solution aways and therefore knows nothing. It is we, not the east that must raise the heroic cry.

The rendering of the ascetic and the pupil in the poem it must be admitted, is admirable :

> Two Chinamen, behind them a third,
> Are carved in lapis lazuli,
> Over them flies a long-legged bird,
> A symbol of longevity;
> The third, doubtless a serving man,

Carries a musical instrument.

One of the specific points made by Yeats is that all tragic art worth the name contains an element of gaiety that transfigures the horror and the pain cleaving to the essential stufff of it. He upholds that a kind of assertion is needed as far as the achievements of the West are concerned. Referring to the Chinamen mentioned earlier he therefore declares:

> There, on the mountain and the sky,
> On all the tragic scene they stare,
> One asks for mournful melodies:
> Accomplished fingers begin to play.
> Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes,
> Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay.

The need for raising the heroic cry may or may not be justified but Yeats's perception of the element of gaiety in *Hamlet* or *Lear* does not stand up to the evidence of our responses. Shakespeare's tragic art does eventually offer us a kind of sublimation of emotions -- an exaltation of spirit, even — but this is hardly to be equated with gaiety. The experience peculiar to tragedy involves some degree of transcendence and Keats was probably nearer the truth when he realised that in *King Lear* all the disagreeables are transmuted into an intensity of apprehension.

"Gulfishan"
Civil Lines
Aligarh

R.N. Rai

DONALD DAVIE'S POETIC RETREAT

The year 1956 was a turning point in the poetic career of Donald Davie, as since then he has started repudiating the basic aims of the Movement poetry which he had nourished so far. He now considers the Movement poetry as anti-Modernist and retrogressive, and calls it 'provincial' and 'limited in scope:

> They are getting rid of pretentiousness and cultural window dressing and arrogant self-expression by creating an English poetry which is severely limited in its aims, painfuly modest in its pretensions, deliberately provincial in its scope. I do not think they would be very offended or even make demur if one added: 'inveitably marginal in importance'[1]

Davie's remarks make it clear that he wanted to break with the Movement poetry and broaden his base by showing greater interest in foreign culture and literature, and by being sympathetic to the forces of Romanticism and Modernism, which he had repudiated earlier. Instead of remaining 'a pasticheur of late-Augustan styles', Davie makes new experiments and leaves himself open to the forces of Imagism and Symbolism. There are certain poems in his second volume *A Winter Talent* (1957) which have crossed the boundaries of his earlier collection, *Brides of Reason* (1955). His earlier hostility towards Romanticism has now yielded to the more searching appraisal of `Dream Forest' where he regards Brutus, Pushkin and Strindberg as types of ideal virtue:

> Classic, romantic, realist
> There have I set up.

Now a new sense of seriousness and a steady reflectiveness have replaced the earlier irony and the smooth versification in

poems such as "Obiter Dicta", "Under St. Paul's, and "The Wind at Penistone." His poem, "Time Passing, Beloved," expresses his sense of grief and bitterness over the `time passing, unslackening, unhastening, steadily, without any asurance being given to the lover:

> What will become of us?Time
> Passing, beloved, and we in a sealed
> Assurance unassailed
> By memory. how can it end,
> This siege of a shore that no misgivings have steeled,
> No doubts defend?

The poem may be compared to Lawrence's "Piano" in its emotional freedom and compassionate apeal. Davie's use of alliteration, repetition and assonance seems surprizing in a poet who had once condemned the excessive use of `sound' at the cost of `meaning' in poetry.

Davie's next collections, *The Forests of Lithuania* (1959) and *A Sequence for Francis Parkman*(1961), were written under the influence of Mickiewicz's poem *Pan Tadeusz* and the prose of Parkman respectively. They reveal his greater resourcefulness and the larger variety of versification. The remarkable description of Lithuania's vast impenetrable forest, swarming with foliage and animal life, is perhaps the most effective part of the poem.

> Once Past
> The manageable tangles,
> The rampart rises—logs,
> Roots, stump's, which a quagmire defends—
> And water, and nets
> Of rank weeds and ant-hills, and knots
> Of snakes, and the wasp's and hornet's
> Nests.

The poem displays the richness and density of language in expressing the physical details of the forest and its inhabitants.

In the early 'sixties Davie was appointed Head of the University Department at Essex, which was devoted to a Comparative Literature Programme. He now wrote several essays on the problems of translation and translated himself the works of Pasternak. With the publication of *Events and Wisdoms* in 1964,

he came under the influence of Wordsworth and Pasternak and developed a lyrical bent of mind which was against the Movement norms of wit and self-consciousness. Referring to this change A.P.Swarbrick has pointed out that "the over didacticism of Davie's earlier poetry gives way to a more lyrical and tender observation of landscape and place"[2]. In his poem, "The Feeders," the poet is concerned with the exploration of his feelings and emotions:

Now I must feed myself
On feelings fresh from their source.
Flashfloods tapped in the highlands
Under the glare of noon.

There is a natural flow and melodious sonority in the poems of this collection. Look at his poem "A lily at noon"

Deep-sea frost, and
Lillies at noon...
Late leaves, late leaves
Toss every day.
The daymoon shines always for some.
In the marriage of a slow man
Eighteen years is soon.

We find Davie as the maker and preserver of images which he considers to be a part of his vocation. He is willing to accept the strength of Romantic poetry and regrets that the Movement poets' attempt to 'oust' Romanticism was the result of their misunderstanding. Admitting their limitations Davie frankly stated in 1966:

We must be glad to be compelled to recognise that we are all, like it or not, post-Romantic people, that the historical developments which we label 'Romanticism' were not a series of aberrations which we can and should disown, but rather a sort of landslide which permanently transformed the mental landslide which in the twentieth century we inhabit, however reluctantly. It seems to me now that this was a recognition which I came to absurdly late in life; that my teachers when I was young, encouraged me to think that I could expunge Romanticism from my historical past by a mere act of will or stroke of the pen, and that by doing this I could climb back into the lost garden of the seventeeth century.[3]

During this period Davie's concept of poetry also changed significantly. He quoted Pasternak several times in order to suggest

that during poetic composition language is, at certain moments, in the 'ascendancy' and 'begins to think and speak' for the poet. In an interview with Millicent Dillon, Davie acknowledged: "...it was by studying Pasternak particularly, very intensely in the late 1950s and the 1960s, that I learned how to suppress the abstracting and conceptualizing part of my intelligence in favour of the image-making and sensuous perceptions"[4]. Though this may not be exactly the 'inspirational' view of poetry, but it does recognize in opposition to the Movement concept of poetry, that there is something other than the 'conscious intention' of the poet which plays an important role in the composition of poetry. It is a view which Davie feels he can "partially confirm from (his) own experience in writing poems"[5]. Since he had begun to realise the presence of such forces which could not be encompassed by a rational or empirical world-view, he came closer to the Romantic view of poetry. His participation in a continuing Romantic tradition has now become more apparent.

Another very significant aspect of Davie's break with the Movement ideology was his developing interest and greater respect for the forces of Modernism, which he had earlier repudiated very strongly. During the early 50s the term 'consolidation' did not refer to the consolidation of Modernism but rather to the consolidation of 'English tradition' which had been interrupted by the forces of Modernism. By 1959, however, the poet was fully convinced that among his contemporaries there was a "conspiracy to pretend that Eliot and Pound never happened"[6]. Davie now came under the influence of these poets, but did not become a regular practitioner of free verse (his occasional experiments in free verse have not been successful either). He now held the view that the rejection of Modernism was definitely an act of insularity and retrogression. In one of his poems "Or, Solitude," he acknowledged:

> The metaphysicality
> Of poetry, how I need it!
> And yet it was for years
> What I refused to credit.

Davie's break with the Movement poetry certainly liberated him and enabled him to compose some of the best poems of his life. He now called for a poetry that would reveal 'spiritual reality'. However he could not repudiate the total aesthetic of the Movement

School and continued to defend some of its trends.

Even after his emigration to California in 1968, Davie was so acutely conscious of his roots that he was forced to record his anguish and perplexity of deracination. Since his stay in America, his love for England has not diminished. He is not only wistful for the past. but expresses his rancour and indignation at the 'depleted present'. His long poem, "England", which was composed in 1969, relfects. says Gregory A Schirmer, "the general crisis or identity and allegiance that Davie experienced in the late 1960s, especially through four troubled years as Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Essex"[7]. It expreses his anger and bitterness agaisnt what he called declining moral standards:

> The bluff stuff. Double bluff
> Brutal manners, brutal
> simplifications as
> We drag it all down.
> And where is there left to be seen
> by Tom the butler now
> We couple like dogs in the yard?
>
> Gone, gone as the combo
> starts in digging the beat
> and the girls from the nearest college
> of Further Education
> spread their excited thights.

The poem seems to be partly concerned with what is sometimes known as the 1960s 'sexual revolution.' Like Eliot, Davie too has developed a distaste for the relaxation of moral standards, and has equated sexual freedom with libertinism. He is of the opinion that when 'we couple like dogs in the yard', it naturally leads to the degeneration of our moral and spiritual values.

In his next poem *The Shires* (1974) Davie tries to enlarge his poetic range. It is neither a travel account of the poet nor merely a description of each English County. It is rather, as Dana Gioia has suggested, "the deeply personal meditation of an exiled poet about his troubled relationship with his native country. it is as much autobiographical as topographical"[8]. It is encyclopaedic in range and didactic in approach. It is able to harmonize the personal as well as social themes. The poet has succeeded in rediscovering his own identity in relation to his nation.

Davie's next collection *In the Stopping Train & Other Poems*(1977) displays his remarkable development as a poet, especially at a time when formal versatility and inventive craft are rare and a sense of civic responsibility even rarer. The collection reveals his growing concern with Russian poetry, with the new American experience and the experience of modern England. He is now convinced that the mind is not a safe retreat, a tidy home' and that reason alone is not sufficient to encompass the full range of human experience. Whereas during the 50s he was of the opinion that "the idea comes into my mind more readily than the sensuous expereince"[9], in the 70s he admitted: "Idea' is not what we are primarily concerned with. In the sense that a painter's medium is paint, what is a poet's medium? Not ideas, but words, language. More of the language is concerned with images than with ideas"[10].

The title poem "In the Stopping Train" is certainly one of his most outstanding pieces and reveals a 'new thematic range' and a `new manner'. It is nearly a `confessional' poem and an `egotistical self-indulgence'. Commenting upon the theme of the poem, Davie himself remarked: "The poem is an expression of a mood of profound depression and uncertainty about what it has meant for me personally, and for people close to me..."[11]. The poem immediately states the theme that there is a tension between the `I' of the poem and the `he' `the man going mad inside me':

> I have got into the slow train
> again. I made the mistake knowing what I was doing,
> knowing who had to be punished.
>
> I know who has to be punished:
> the man going mad inside me.
> Whether I was fleeing
> from him or towards him.

In his interview with Millicent Dillon in 1977, he expressed his view on the poetic device that he had used in this poem:

> It is true that the basic device is to set up an 'I' and a 'he", to split myself in two. This is not to be taken as meaning that in any way it was written in a schizoid frame of mind or that in any way it is an exploration of potential schizophrenia. It was in fact a deliberate device.. to effect the depersonalising of a highly personal theme[12]

The paradox of human life infuriates him and that is why 'he ' is going mad. The 'I' persona of the poem is rather calm and juggles with the ideas of stopping and starting in a relaxed manner:

> A stopping train, I thought,
> was a train that was going to stop.
> Why board it then in the first place?
>
> Oh no, they explained, it was stopping
> and starting, stopping and starting.
>
> How could it, they reasoned gently,
> be always stopping unless
> also it was always starting.

The poet's journey in a stopping train is nothing but his journey to an uncertain future which is so bleak and unpredictable that time has become a great torture to him:

> Time and again, oh time and
> that stopping train!
> Who knows when it comes to a stand,
> and will not start again.

He does not find any charm in life which seems to be full of dejection and boredom. He sees "the passenger staring through/ the hot unmoving pain/of boredom".

The relationship between 'I' and 'he' seems to be constantly changing, like the ambiguous relationship between the 'I' and the 'you' in Eliot's "Prufrock". The reader is astonished to see an abrupt change of perspective at the end to the poem:

> He knew too few in love,
> too few in love.
>
> A cause of so much bother?
> He knew too few in love.

Should 'he' behave like that if he were really going mad? 'He', in this poem, is also a man who ought to know 'me' and vice versa. If there is no proper understanding between 'I' and 'he' in

the human personality, there is bound to be tension and turmoil in human life.

We thus see that though Davie in the 'fifties reacted shrply against Romanticism and Modernism, he later on made a poetic retreat and tried to imbibe their dominant trends with greater richness and profundity. He is a poet who is constantly widening and deepening the range of his poetry. He possesses the vision of a man who reveals to us what life can be or ought to be.

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[3]*The Poet in the Imaginary Museum*, p.144.
[4]Donald Davie, *Trying to Explain* (Manchester: Carcanet New Press Ltd., 1980), pp.43-4.
[5]*The Poet in the Imaginary Museum*, p. 109.
[6]Ibid., p.67.
[7]"On Donald Davie, an indispensable man," *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 2 (1983), B1.
[8]Dana Gioia, "A Map of The Shires," *Donald Davie and the Responsibilities of Literature, ed.* George Dakker, (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1983), p 104.
[9]Donald Davie, *Collected Poems 1950-1970* (London: R.& K. Paul, 1972), p. 302.
[10]*Trying to Explain*, p.42.
[11]Ibid., p.47.
[12]Ibid. p.47.

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[11]Ibid., p.47.
[12]Ibid. p.47.

Mina Surjit Singh

THE POETRY OF ADRIENNE RICH

Often rebuked, yet always back returning
I place my hand on the
hand of the dead

[Rich 1975 : 77]

From the 70's on, the advent of the women's movement and the accompanying growth in women's conciousness of themselves, has stimulated the creative energies of a great many women poets. The tradition of feminist writing is dominated by the struggle for freedom from all forms of oppression and by the personal odyssey to realise the full potential of one's complex identity as a woman and as a writer. A prototypal journey that derives its consciouness from the group experience of women, it begins in physical and psychological bondage and ends in some ambiguous form of deliverance or vision of a new world of mutual respect and justice. Its encoded messages subtly yet forcefully decry oppression and reflect the evolving socio-cultural, socio-psychological duality of women writers whose humanity and strengths have been institutionally devalued and marginalised by an androcentric order. Impelled by personal resistance to sexual dominance women writers turned primarily to their kinship network for survival strategies. As members of an oppressed group feminist writers developed their personal and gender identities within and against the distinctive pattern of values, orientations to life and shared ancestral memories they accquired from and contributed to.

The best known among the women poets of the 70's, Adrienne Rich envisions "an ideal America beyond divisive polarities including the sexual " (Gelpi 1975:xi). Quoting from Eric Newman who traces the "perils of present-day mankind...in large part " to " the one-sidedly

patriarchal development of the male intellectual consciouness which is no longer kept in balance by the matriarchal world of the psyche " [Rich 1972:99] Rich reiterates that:

> Neuman is concerned not with the liberation of actual women, or even with the political organisation of men but with the collective loss and fragmentation suffered by human beings in the denial and suppression of the *feminine* (Italics mine) [Rich 1972:99)

Erica Jong, in her essay "Visionary Anger", observes that Rich is not talking about discrimination against women but against the feminine which she (Jong) perceives as " the nurturant qualities in all people - whatever their sex ". [Jong 1973:172]. Rich is curious and expectant about the future of masculine consciouness as well and appeals to men to be kinder to themselves by recognising and not struggling against their own subjective/feminine natures in order to save themselves from destruction :

> The tragedy of sex
> lies around us, a woodlot
> the axes are sharpened for .....
> A man's world. But finished.
> They themselves have sold it to the machines.
> [Rich 1973:62]

Like a non-functional machine:

> A man is asleep in the next room.
> He has spent a whole day
> standing, throwing stones into the black pool
> which keeps its blackness.
> [Rich 1973:65].

Her vision is the creation of a humanity which will not glorify the chasm between male and female but heal it. The battle against a divisive patriarchy can best be won by rewriting old patriarchal myths, for writing is " renaming ", "re-visioning", which Rich says is "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes....an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves"[Rich 1971:90]. Rich's "Visionary androgyne", to use Jong's term, will not only be the bisexual arist but anyone who is concerned with saving the world from destruction. The drive to self-

knowledge is only a search for identity but part of her refusal of the self-destructiveness of a particular culture — a patriarchy which implies not only:

a tracing of descent through the father.....but any kind of group organization in which males hold dominant power and determine what part females shall and shall not play, and in which capabilities assigned to women are relegated generally to the mystical and aesthetic and excluded from the practical and political realms. (it is characteristic of patriarchal thinking that these realms are regarded as seperate and mutually exclusive) ....Based as it is on genital difference, its concept of sex is genitally centred; entire zones of the body (and soul) are to be used simply as means to a genital end. [Rich 1972:101]

Looking back, "re-vinsioning" thus entails an exploration of

the wreck and not the story of the wreck
The thing itself and not the myth

[Rich 1973:67].

and the poet herself would be the instrument of that exploration :

.....trying to translate pulsations
into images for the relief of the body
and the reconstruction of the mind.

[Rich 1971:46].

She :

Would have loved to live in a world
of men and women gaily
.....
each with its own pattern -
a conspiracy to coexist

but she confesses :

The only real love I have ever felt
was for children and other women
Everything else was lust, pity,
self-hatred, pity, lust.

[Rich 1973:71].

On receiving the National Book Award in 1974 for her volume *Diving into the Wreck*, 1973 Rich rejected the award individually but accepted

it in the name of all women :

> whose voices go unheard in a patriarchal world...and those like us who have been tolerated as token women in this culture often at great cost and in great pain...We symbolically join here in refusing the terms of patriarchal competition.[Gelpi 1975:204].

She cautions against the subversive nature of the patriarchal myth of the special/token women which, flattering as it may be, can be divisive and destructive, setting women against women and woman against herself. Such women would be romanticized and tolerated as long as, their "words and actions didn't threaten" men's "privilege of tolerating or rejecting" women "according to their ideas of what a special woman ought to be".[Rich 1971:93]. Rich dedicated the occasion to "the struggle for self-determination of all women of every colour, identification or derived class. Rich believes that the struggle of women can have meaning; only they can help change the lives of women whose gifts - and whose very being - continues to be thwarted. Her feminism is a natural extension of her poetry because, for her, feminism means an imaginative identification with all women, an empathy "the so called weak ego boundaries" that Keatsian quality of "negative capability", [Rich 1974:115] from which spring the most profound revolutions. She sees the role of poet and revolutionary as totally compatible. Her poetry addresses itself to an identity politics which concerns itself less with how women have been spoken of, shown to be and more to the question of how we can *speak* for women. Her empathy is not reserved for women alone but is extended to the revolutionary male as well, as is evident in her poem "To Frantz Fanon" (1968), the Algerian psychiatrist and revolutionary. She is forceful in her insistence that it is important for oppressed people to fight back in order to gain selfhood and identify.[Martin 1975:182]. Later, however, she realised that radical men were as sexist as traditional patriarchs and it was necessary for women to determine their own political vision.

Poetry and Patriarchy is a major engagement with Rich who is well aware of the challenges women writers in the past have been confronted with. I quote here her poem on Emily Dickinson :

> "Half-cracked" to Higginson, living
> afterward famous in garbled version,
> Your hoard of dazzling scraps a battlefield,
> now your old snood-

Mothballed at Harvard and
you in your variorum monument
equivocal to the end-
who are you?
.....
you, woman, masculine
in single-mindedness,
for whom the word was more
than a symptom -
a condition of being.
Till the air buzzing with spoiled language
sang in your ears
of Perjury

and in your half-cracked way you chose
silence for entertainment,
chose to have it out at last
on your own premises.

[Rich 1966:30-31].

Rich argues that for women to be recognised as poets in their own right a change in the concept of sexual identity is essential as is a redefining of the parameters of love. "Where woman has been luxury for man and has served as the painter's model, the poet's muse", along with being "comforter, nurse, cook, bearer of his manuscripts, man has played quite a different role for the female artist". [Rich 1971:92]. From a masculine point of view the very nature of lyric poetry is inherently incompatible with the nature or essence of femaleness and a "woman poet is a contradictions in terms" {Gilbert and Gubar:28]. While commenting on a critical obsession with fulfillment, Gilbert and Gubar cite the example of John Crowe Ransom and John Cody's critical assessment of Emily Dickinson's poetry. While one traces her creativity to the fulfillment of romance the other atributes her art to its "tormenting" absence. Neither "imagines that poetry itself could possibly constitute a woman's fulfillment. On the contrary both assume that the art of a women's poet must in some sense arise from romantic feelings." [Gilbert and Gbar:30]. They suggest further that women's poetry when it "has been praised" has been "praised for its feminity: and unromantic and unfeminine political verse is considered the work of perversity and insanity as exemplified by the adverse critical comment the poetry

of Dickinson or Elizabeth Barrett Browning invited. Rich, too, talks of Marianne Moore being the most admired - by men - among the early woman poets for her "maidenly, elegant intellectual, discreet" poetry.[Rich 1971:94]. It is the death of this stereotypical, mythic, angelic woman poet that the feminist poet has been working toward. By becoming her own heroine, her own midwife, she seeks to bringing forth her own monstrous being which is not "loss of some fragile 'feminine' quality jeopardized by excellence in reasoning and analysis..." but a "consciouness of self as Other which Simon de Beauvoir has described as that being towards whom man often feels fear, guilt and hostility, and about whom he weaves his least defensible theories.[Rich 1972:102-103]. This : "...woman in the shape of a monster, a monster in the shape of woman" [Rich 1971:45] will have the potential of the most genuinely radical thought and questioning, and argument that finds echo in "Necessities of Life" as well:

> Jonah! I was Wittgenstein,
> Mary Wollstonecraft, the soul
>
> of Louis Jouvet, dead
> in a blown-up photograph.
> Till, wolfed almost to shreds,
> I learned to make myself
>
> Unappetizing, Scaly as a dry bulb
> thrown into a cellar
> I used myself, let nothing use me.
>
> [Rich 1966:23]

Concerned with the way women have been opposed and their activities systematically devalued, she emphasises the difference between the way being a woman in our society is and the way it could be and between how some behaviour is viewed now and how it should be. Rich laments the mediocrity, self-indulgence, lack of will and discipline that results from the femininity - to be understood as sexual passivity, male domination, and a nurturing maternal love. This romantic myth is questioned by Rich and other women poets caught in a "double bind" which can be tentatively understood as a split, an opposition between their imagination and their real life-styles, their vacation and their gender. Gilbert and Gubar, however, refer to a "triple bind", that

women are cought in. If women poets are well - read their scholarship is "ignored or even mocked", if not they are held in contempt. The greatest challenge, however, comes from the subtle devaluing of whatever alternative tradition the woman poet attempts to substitute for `ancient rules'[Gilbert and Gubar:33]. For Rich who cared a great deal about her husband and children the dichotomy between fulfilling traditional female roles and the subversive function of the imagination becomes particularly painful and she seeks ways in which the "energy of creation and the energy of relation can be united"[Rich 1971:96]. This whole process which is seen as a choice between love (womanly, altruistic, maternal) and egotism (the force that is directed by men into creation, ambition and achievement often at the cost of others) needs to be `re-visioned' and redefined, for Rich declares that "women can no longer be primarily mothers and muses for men"[Rich 1971:98]. In her book *Of Woman Born* Rich discusses motherhood as it is now and as it could be, distinguishing between motherhood's potential and motherhood as an institution - defined and ruled by the weight of an entire culture. She denies very near the beginning of the book the existence of a nurturing instinct as a special female strength and cautions against promoting it for creating a new regime for that is a ploy that could be a trap [Evans 1995:85], Evans suggests that Rich does not believe there is anything "natural about the entire complex that is motherhood now nor is there anything innate about the emotions involved"[Evans 1995:85]. Rich's contention is that,"We learn...those qualities...patience, self-sacrifice, the willingness to repeat endlessly the small routine chores of socialising a human being" together with the fierce mixture of "love and violence by which a mother would kill for her child"[Evans 1995:84]. And yet, powerless in a patriarchy woman's powerlessness could very well have a cascading effect and turn a beneficent female principle into a self-destructive tendency by which she could kill the child herself. "In a very non-violent way people can be so physically damaging to other people that they are violent".[Rich 1974:106]. Motherhood gives woman power but female power brings male retaliation and dislike. Motherhood so moulded and stemming from patriarchal control "is the major source of women's inequality and denies" to them "its most powerful" and most "fearful aspect - authentic love". Institutionalized motherhood built on a series of self-denials "then has been a poisoned chalice"[Evans 1995:84].

Sharing the cultural/radical femininst's hope for change through the recognition of a benefient female principle Rich rejects a patriarchal order that threatens women and children and advocates liberation of the female principle, "The mother in all women and the woman in some men" from the confines of "any male-induced notions of where the female principle is valid or where it is not".[Rich 1972:104-105]. Rich however is different from the stereotypical essentialist feminists in her advocacy of women's active participation in scientific disciplines, especially those relevant to reproductive change.

Closely linked with the idea of motherhood and a woman's culture is Rich's proposal that all women are lesbians insofar as they want to identify with other women though that does not mean they must be lesbians"[Evans 1995:86]. For Rich "compulsory heterosexuality", as it exits today, maintains subordination as it demands women's identification with men. In a way women lead double lives because lesbianism is hidden/written away from them. So strong is the institution that it has seldom been asked why the mother-daughter bond does not lead to an identification with women instead. Rich is not a lesbian seperator. Her feminism is far more radical than the cultural feminist's for while she recognises the sex-gender difference, she is not a celebrator of difference. Her feminism, which is heterosexual in nature, enables us to see and feel what we have not clearly felt before. Apprehending it we are in some way connected with both the female principle and the "active principle"—the energetic imagination, Rich's "half-brother"—and are in some fashion changed, renewed, made fresh.

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NOTES

[1]All references to Adrienne Rich's poems and essays are from *Adrienne Rich's Poetry: Texts of the Poems, The Poet on Her Work, Reviews and Criticism*. Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi and Albery Gelpi 1975. Editors New York W W Norton and Co Inc.

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ANIMAL IMAGERY IN THE POETRY OF A.K. RAMANUJAN

In the Great Chain of Being, animals have been allotted a very inferior position, slightly above the lower and microscopic insects. This hierarchy was created to uphold certain values dear to the heart of the Creator. In the immediate neighbourhood of animals was placed man 'made in the image of God.' The peculiarity of man endowed with Janus-like attribues — limited angelic powers to go up and unlimited animalism always dragging him downwards —distinguishes him from the rest of the creatures in the macrocosm. As Douglas Bush puts it:

> The fact of man's animality has become as fixed ad dominant in the modern habit of mind as belief in his rationality and spirituality was throughout earlier ages...[1]

However, man-animal relationship forms a substantive part of ancient literature, oriental or occidental, replete with numerous mythologies and fascinating stories of birds and animals. In a majority of them, animals have been used as allegories for communicating certain otherwise unpalatable truths. One random instance occurs in Tulsidas's *Ram Charit Manas* where Kagbhusundi, the Crow-king, preaches to Garuna, the king of birds. This patrician humility shown towards a plebeian, the most untouchable and ugliest creature, to explicate the epic story is intended to divest the former of his pride and thus, to initiate him into the process of learning.

The term 'animal poem' refers to a poem whose central or controlling image is an animal. In such poems, an animal should first be presented as a sensuously perceived physical reality before it appears as a symbol. In the twentieth century poetry animal imagery has been quite pronouncedly employed by poets like W.B.

Yeats, Lawrence, Auden and Ted Hughes. Of these poets, Ted Hughes alone has created new animal myths, distorted many ancient animal fables and retouched several of them to suit his purpose. With some of the post Second World War Indo-Anglian poets like Ezekiel, Ramanujan, Moraes, Mahapatra and Vikram Seth animal imagery is one of their major creative impulses whose animal poems are enriched by their cross-cultural interactions. This article, however, confines itself to the poetry of A.K. Ramanujan who has produced a fairly large number of animal poems which offer an intricate distillation of unusual feelings and perceptions. Krittika Ramanujan comments in the 'Preface' of *The Collected Poems of A.K. Ramanujan:*

> Animals appear everywhere in the poems, but the poems are not 'about' animals. They have a double vision. The poems are about life, death, cycles of birth, pain and love. They are also about poetry. They are full of irony, humour, paradox and sudden reversals.[2]

Animal imagery in Ramanujan's poems functions broadly in three ways. First, there are poems in which animal imagery functions to criticise man's conduct among men — his moral and ethical behaviour. In these poems man is evaluated in relation to animals. A second group of Ramanujan's animal poems symbolise inward aspects of human experience. Here, animal imagery functions to explicate man's psychological being or to identify his instinctual self. This psychological aspect of animal imagery derives its new colour in the light of modern depth psychology which, Bery Rowland termed as a "monstrous hypertrophic worship of symbols."[3]

Thirdly, there are poems that approach metaphysical questions of death, time, reality, appearance and meaninglessness in terms of animal metaphor. In such poems animal imagery functions to make real man's effort to work out some transcendent truth and to derive the possibilities of meaning.

The variety of ways in which Ramanujan explores and sets forth the animal world suggests that the animal images promise an acute insight into the human predicament. The poems about animals and insects, moving within a context of concern for man's psychology, morality and metaphysical aspiration, turn out to be poems that illuminate human condition. The title poem in *The*

Striders[4] itself is a symbol of the poet's self in terms of his sense of alienation and withdrawal. The image of the New England water insect and the striders' sitting postures are vividly described and characteristically the imagery controls the complex structures of the visual and the symbolic:

> And search
> for certain thin-
> stemmed, bubble-eyed water bugs.
> See them perch
> on dry capillary legs
> weightless
> on the ripple skin
> of a stream.
>
> *(Collected Poems, p.3)*

The overall sketch of the poem is very sculpturesque. By his finely chiseled workmanship in lexis and rhythm, the poem bodies forth the strider alive before us following the meditative pattern of poetry. The colourful display of the "bubble-eyed water bugs" perching "weightless" delineates the supreme facility with which the striders balance themselves on the flowing waters. The image, then, evokes a spiritual dimension. The water bug sits on land and in water with a perfect ease that comes native to its genius and stands comparison with the supernatural powers of the prophet "walking on water". In the image of this creature the insect world is united with the human and the divine worlds and this arrests our contemplation of the poem's visionary framework.

In "Snakes," Ramanujan recalls a past fear and dismay in the living present and describes how the psychological fear of snakes haunts the mind. The poet "thinks of snakes" while "walking in museum of quartz." He views "aunt" and "snake" in the same mood of terror: "Black lorgnettes are etched on their hoods/ ridiculous, alien like some terrible aunt." From this mental image, the poet moves to the visual and describes the movement of a "basketful of cobras" who are brought to the house for rituals:

> A basketful of ritual cobras
> comes into the tame little house,
> Their brown-wheat glisten ringed with ripples.

They lick the room with their bodies, curves
uncurling, writing a sibilant alphabet of panic on my floor.
(Collection Poems, P.4)

The poet imagined snakes as his sister braided her hair. Ramanujan actually stepped on and killed a snake to get rid of the fear haunting him: "No.../and I can walk through the wood". This imaginary fear of snakes expresses voice to "a universal hostility"[5] which we experience in relation to this creature. In several Indian myths also the snake symbolises the forces of oppression and evil. However, Lawrence in his "Snake" is piqued by ambivalent thoughts on sighting a Sicilian snake. So far as the images of physical description of the snakes are concerned, both the poems are based on a complete truthfulness to the fact of common experience. But the snake is "one of the lords of life" in Lawrence and he demonstrates that it is not evil but good, like Blake's vision of Milton's Satan:

For he seemed to me again like a king,
Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,
Now due to be crowned again.[6]

Ramanujan, on the other hand, robs this lord of all its sublime godliness in the Lawrentian sense, so much so that he can be trampled upon by common creatures.

The animal images in "Breaded Fish" evoke strange psychological effects. The poet recalls a half-naked woman dead on a beach. The association of death and an indifferent universe is brought to mind by the dead fish. When offered a tasty dish of fish covered in breadcrumbs the persona cannot accept and relish it because memory, metaphorically presented here as a snake with its "coil" and "hood" nurtures in his mind to create the picture of a dead woman washed up on to the shore by the ebb tide.

dry, rolled by the ebb, breaded
by the grained indifference of sand, I headed
for the shore, my heart beating in my mouth
(Collected Poems,. p.7)

In "Epitaph on a Street Dog," the poet describes the most un-divine

of animals, the street bitch that litters twelve pups and expires feeding them:

> She spawned in hurry a score of pups,
> all bald, blind, and growing old at her paps;
> some of them alive
> enough to die in the cold of her love.
> Peacocks may have eyes in their tails, crests.
> But she had in a row four pair of breasts,
> where blind mouths plucked and swilled their fill
> till mouths had eyes and she was full of flies.
>
> *(Collected Poems, p.43)*

Ramanujan's attitude towards a bitch can be contrasted with W.H. Auden's "Talking to Dogs"[7] where the poet handles the theme in his usual humorous style and the poem betrays his sense of sympathy for dogs.

There are certain poems in which the poet uses animal images to explore human nature in human contexts. With the help of the potent animal metaphors Ramanujan, in his satirical poem, "Lac into Seal" expresses his vital concern for the lack of moral values in the world of contemporary politicians. The poet in the opening stanza compares a politician with a crow — the symbol of evil and crookedness — and the poor masses with a cow — the symbol of innocence.

> When summer months branch backward
> day after day after day
> you'll only see now and then
> a crow or two stropping
> its beak on the back of a cow
>
> *(Collected Poems, p.50)*

Man's affinity with nature and environment reflecfts in several of Ramanujan's poems in the second book of poems, *Relations.*[8] "Army Ants " infuses human ideals of socialism into ant life. Similarly in "Old Indian Belief" and "And Image for Politics" the poet draws a parallel between animal or insect and human worlds. In "An Image for Politics" the poet graphically portrays a mackerel that devours worms, becoming the food of worms after it is dead. "Old Indian Belief " Describes the industry of a million ants that

construct their ant hill with "methodical" precision but the smell of live cobra drives them out from their houses:

> million ants with brief
> methodical lives and calcium
> limbs to build one ant-hill
>
> and leave it in time
> for the great recurring pattern of the sudden snake.
> (*Collected Poems*, p. 106)

In the poem "Of Mothers, among other Things" the reference to a "father" follows a bird metaphor. Besides the precise description, what distinguishes the poem from the usual is the comparison of a "Wet eagle's feet" with the mother's hands. In Greek mythology, the eagle is the vehicle of the supreme God, Zeus. And as the poet-persona associates the eagle with the female figure in this poem, the suggestion might be that after the father's death, the mother assumes the role of the father. In this way, the close parallel the poet establishes between insect life and humans, strengthens his feeling of affinity with nature.

Many poems of Ramanujan employ or express a human desire for acceptance by and union with the animals and in most cases the poet strives for emotional immediacy. This attitude of the poet reminds us of Emily Dickinson's friendly attitude towards animals:

> Several of Nature's people
> I know, and they know me
> I feel for them a transport of cordiality.[9]

The poet has also used animal images to explore active and contemplative human roles in nature. In the poems of the active role, the focus is upon the conserving roles, the destroying role, the responsible hunting role or the role of the human victim of a creature's constructive power. In poems searching the contemplative relationship with nature the role is that of an objective observer, a celebrant or an alien being. For example, in one of his celabrated poems, "The Hindu: he doesn't hurt a fly or a Spider either," the poet speaks of his inability to kill a fly or a spider, even if they are ominous and destructive. His weakness surfaces from

the point of his conviction that these creatures could be the manifestation of the Almighty:

> It's time I told you why
> I'm so gentle, do not hurt a fly.
> Why, I cannot hurt a spider
> either, not even a black widow
> for who can tell Who's Who?
>
> (*Collected Poems*, p.62)

Even the most humane of Western writers have rarely demonstrated such a delicate concern for petty creatures and insects. Similarly, the reference of a "Six-inch Spider" in "Conventions of Despair" conveys Ramanujan's antagonistic attitude against such modern artists and scientists who are heartless and express no concern for other human beings and animals. The subsequent description of hell in the framework of animal images, as "frog-eyed dragons" "crow foot eyes" and "Peacock-feathered future" project hell in the mind as a direct response to visual stimuli.

The animal images in the poem "A River" are significant in order to delineate the basic patterns of texture of the poem: in order to be called a poet, one must express concern for animals and human beings rather than simply highlight and cite poets of repute or describe nature in the wild fury. The flooded river becomes poetic and colourful through animal imagery and it adds an unexpected dimension to the reading experience:

> the wet stones listening like sleepy
> crocodiles, the dry ones
> shaven water-buffaloes lounging in the sun.
>
> (*Collected Poems*, p. 38)

This image of "shaven water-buffaloes lounging in the sun" reminds us of Sujata Bhatt's poem "Buffaloes" in which a similar image characteristically evokes a sense of longing in the persona's mind:

> Her dreams lie
> lazily swishing their tails
> in her mind like buffaloes
> dozing, with only nostrils showing in a muddy pond.[10]

Some of the poems in Ramanujan's third book of poems *Second Sight*[11] playfully explore the connections between the human and the animal world in terms of animal images. Significantly, a poem which shows human concern for animals is "Zoo garden Revisited." While revisiting animals in the zoo, the poet recalls how some naughty visitors inflict tortures on innocent animals confined there. The poet marks that ostriches are afraid of hiding their heads in sand now because the fun-loving visitors harshly set their tail feathers on fire with cigarette lighters simply for the sake of amusement. Similarly, the intelligent monkeys are afraid of tasting bananas "with small exquisite needles in them" provided by the degraded zoo visitors. Finally, the writer invokes various Hindu gods who resemble animals in some way or the other. By expressing concern for animals and establishing the relationship between gods and animals the poet has transmuted what K.S.Paul termed "the common into the unique, the local into the universal, and the familiar into the mythical."[12]

The poet takes recourse to various Indian myths associated with animals. To protect the universe from destruction and annihilation, Lord Vishnu had taken many incarnations some of which are associated with animals and other small creatures. The Lord became Matsya-"the fish" - to save Manu and also He took the incarnation of Varaha "the boar" - to lift the earth from waters. In the shape of Narsimha - "the man-lion" - He delivered the world from the tyranny of a demon named Hiranyaksipu. Hindus believe that he is to become Kalki -"the white horse" -to purge the universe. According to an Indian myth, an elephant, Gajendra, was redeemed from the jaws of a crocodile by Lord Vishnu. Reminding human beings of their intimate relationship with animals the poet cautions that the animals now face the great threat of extinction from a dehumanised human race, and therefore he wants the animals to be saved from victimization:

> Lord of lion face, boar snout, and fish eyes,
> Killer of killer cranes, shepherd of rampant, elephants,
> Devour my lambs, devour them whole, save them
> in the zoo garden ark of your belly.
>
> (*Collected Poems*, p. 154)

The mutual penetration of animal, human and divine worlds which we locate in the "Zoo Garden revisited" and several other poems moves many steps further in the posthumous volume of poems, *The Black Hen*, published in *The Collcted Poems*. Molly Daniels Ramanujan in her note on *The Black Hen* comments that Ramanujan "prayed for double vision and found it in the interconnnectedness of vegetable and mieral, man and animal".[13] One has in mind such striking animal poems as "Salamanders," "The Black Hen," "Bulls," "On Not Learning from Animals," which expand the course of mapping the common interdependence by mystifying and transcendeing man-animals relationship. In an austere style, the little poem, "The Black Hen" probes the very nature of life and art in terms of a bird metaphor and ultimately "threatens the very being of the poet."[14] The Black Hen lives within the verse through its power to horrify:

It must come as leaves
to a tree
or not at all
Yet it comes sometimes
as the black hen
with the red round eye

On the embroidery
stitch by stich
dropped and found again

and when it's all there
the black hen stares
with its round red eye
and you're afraid

(*Collected Poems*, p. 195)

Tom Marshall has pertinently commented that "the poems on animals constitute a kind of research into man's evolutionary past,... what the animal life means to itself, and thus by extension what it means to the animal in us", [15] What makes the animal world fascinating is its primordial purity that man's divided consciousness lacks. Fish, thus, is the symbol of primordial non-human otherness. Ramanujan enters the non-human world of animals armed with sympathy but does not sentimentalise these creatures. A sense of

objectivity is discernible in his concentration in observing a particular animal or bird. The poet is not interested in just drawing verbal portraits of animals and birds nor does he go at them with preconceived ideas and try to twist them into meanings they would not naturally take.

In Ramanujan's poetry, generally the pet or the gentle animals —dog, fish, buffalo, cow, strider, fly — have attracted the poet's attention. Even a snake is regarded as a social creature that bites only when attacked. Also, in Hindu myths, the snake is worshipped as a deity and it is believed that the whole of the earth rests on the head of Sheshnag. The festival Nagpanchami is celebrated as a mark of reverence to this God. It is not a matter of trivial insignificance at all that the poet records with deep agony the washing away of the two cows — Gopi and Brinda — by the swollen river in the poem, "A River".Of the pet animals, cow is the most sacred to a Hindu who worships her as mother and this points to the poet's raligious faith which has its eloquent bearing on his poetic oeuvre. In his search for affinities to identify the self, Ramanujan seeks to explore the similarities between human and insect societies. In fact, for Ramanujan it is the insect world that is most satisfying. Thus, "Striders" is in this regard not only an imagistic poem of New England water insect but one that expresses the intrinsic human urge to seek the divine. The Divine is not revealed through rituals and practices but through the most ordinary creatures. Ramanujan surveys the animal world with receptive attention, experiencing the emotional, intellectual or spirutual response they might evoke.

The deliberate avoidance of ferocious animals and birds like tiger, lion, vulture is of utmost significance in Ramanujan's poetry. The typical Indian sensibility is ascetic or spirital in character and it lays great emphasis on this aspect, unlike the Greek culture where physical vigour and vitality is of utmost importance. The abundance of violent animal imagery in post-War English poetry should be viewed in the light of contemporary destructive scenes where physical energy or force seems to be the only alternative to settle issues. Poets like Ted Hughes have distorted several traditional myths, Pagan or Christian to articulate their sense of elemental energy under the mask of giving an outlet to emotional desires. Any glorification of images of catastrophic violence

amounts to convulsing the accepted human values and Ramanujan's deep rootedness in his native culture propels him to comprehend the essence of the non-human world dispassionately.

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Anand Prabha Barat

ALDOUS HUXLEY'S *ISLAND* : A STUDY IN BUDDHIST ETHOS

The reading of Buddhist literature left a deep impression on the fictional and non-fictional writings of Aldous Huxley. The Buddhist ethos that can be prominently felt in his later works, has become very emphatic in the novel *Island* (1962). Set in the framework of a uptopain society, the world of Pala takes us to Huxley's model world where the scientific views of the West are synchronized with the religious attitude of the East. Pala is an imaginary island near Indonesia where the dominant religion is Buddhism. As the novelist says," Buddhism came to Pala about twelve hundred years ago, and it came not from Ceylon, which is what one would have expected, but from Bengal, and through Bengal later on, from Tibet." (Huxley, 1975, p.75). We are told that Dr. Andrew by profession a scientist and the Palanese king, the pious Mahayana Buddhist became firm friends and their joint efforts became successful in combining the knowledge and power of Western world with theories of Buddhism. Slowly Buddhism came to be known as the essence of the island. The first book published in the island of Pala is *The Arbian Nights* and the second book the translation of *The Diamond Sutra*, a Buddhist scripture, the one devoted to delineation of Perfect Wisdom by Lord Buddha.

Thus the theme of Buddhism is not an external imposition but an intrinsic part of the texture of the novel. The novelist by means of introducing the Buddhist ethos through the characters and the plot has tried to call our attention to humanistic values of Buddhism which exalts man to the highest pinnacle of love and wisdom and asserts the intrinsic greatness of man's capacity to work out his own salvation. The Palanese island specially highlights the Buddhist attitude of freeing the mind from conceptualization, to realize Buddha Nature in all and to see the Tathata or Suchness

in all leading to a feeling of compassion for all. These are symbolically presented through the mysterious repetition of the call of mynah bird calling "Attention! Here and now" and "Karuna" throughout the novel. The word "Attention" in the context of Buddhism might suggest to be attentive to dualities of individual mind, sponsored by ego which put obstruction on the path of Nirvana. There are different streams of thought presented through Radha's yoga technique, the spirituality of Rani and the Western scientific ideas of Will Farnaby. But the stream of Buddhist ethos presented through Sushila MacPhail and Robert MacPhail overtops other stream of thought.

The novel can be viewed as the spiritual journey of Will Farnaby, the protagonist, from the Western world into the world of Buddhism, which finally ends with his realization of Suchness or Tathata leading to a feeling of compassion for all under the effect of *moksha* medicine.

The story of the journalist Will Farnaby begins with the wreckage of his boat near the strait of Rending Lobo in the storm, which leaves him wounded and unconscious all alone on the island. After gaining consciousness he is taken by two children Tom Krishna and Marry Sarojini, to their grandfather Robert MacPhail and mother Sushila MacPhail, in whose company Will becomes aware of the Buddhist concepts of Tathata, or Suchness, Compassion, and three Signs of Being. The bruised heart of Will caused by his physical wounds and the memory of the tragic death of his wife Molly, gets an anchorage on the elucidation of Buddhist concepts by Sushila and Dr. Robert. Will's story is a kind of religious quest as it ends with a note of self-realization in which he becomes conscious of his selfhood and begins to have a feeling of Compassion for all. To use Jung's term, the process of individuation, tends its 'Wholenes' or 'Integration', Individuation in Jungs' view is a spiritual jouney and refers to a state of mind in which the individual develops an attitude that is beyond the reach of violent shocks and is accompanied by a sense of detachment. Will reaches a similar state of mind at the end of the novel. His story ends with the realization of Compassion and lack of it in himself:

"Attention, Karuna'. Will looked down at his burning bush and saw the suchness of the world and his own being blazing away with the clear light that was also (how

obviously now!) Compassion the clear light that like everyone else, he had always chosen to be blind to, the compassion to which he had always preferred his tortures, endured or inflicted, in a bargain basement, his squalid solitudes,with the living Babs or the dying Molly in the foreground, with Joe Aldehyde in the middle distance and, in the remote background, the great world of impersonal forces and proliferating numbers, of collective paranoias, and organized diabolism. (Huxley, 1975, p.285).

The realization of Tathata or Suchness in all the objects of the world leading to a compassionate feeling for all replenishes Will with a resistance power to fight with the bitter memories of his life with a newly developed perspective. His Western and scientific attitude towards life is replaced by awareness of Tathata or Suchness. It is a Buddhist terminology meaning to look into the basic nature of things, by going beyond the discrimination caused by ego. The walls of ego get dissolved in Will and he comes to realise the cause of suffering rooted in ego. "This dark little inspissated clot that is called "I" was capable of suffering to infinity and, inspite of death the suffering would go on for ever. (Huxley, 1975, p.276). The moksha-medicine, a drug, makes Will have this realisation and spiritual illumination and this might appear farcical. But the point to be noted is that the drug helps in the revelation of the supra-normal territories of his mind. Huxley admits it through one of his characters that "the *Moksha*-medicine prepares one for the reception of gratuitious graces — pre-mystical visions of the full-blown mystical experiences. Meditation is one of the ways in which one co-operates with those gratuitous graces" (Huxley, 175, p.184).

The Buddhist ethos of the novel is primarily constructed on the two pillars — Sushila Mac Phail and her father-in-law, Dr. Robert Mac Phail. Sushila Mac Phail's deep penetration into the Buddhist concepts has imparted her a note of poise and poigance, equanimity, tranquillity of mind and a power to bear the shock of the death of her husband Dugald. Her awareness of the Three Signs of Being and Buddha Nature repeatedly occurs in her elaboration of Buddhist concepts of Will. The Three Signs of Being in Buddhism are suffering *(dukha)* - the qualities that are shared by all living beings of the world. The concept of *anatman* gives way to the concept of Buddha Nature, the comerstone of Buddhist ethos. The term Buddha Nature means the innermost or the Hidden Essence of Mind which is pure and radiant in nature and which is also called

Sunyata or Void. While explaining the Buddha Nature and Three Signs of Being to Will Farnaby, Sushila says:

> And that precisely, is the first half of the Buddha's message Transience, no permanent soul, Inevitable sorrow. But he didn't stop there, the message had a second half. This temporary slowdown of entropy is also pure undiluted Suchness. This absence of a permanent soul is also the Buddha Nature (Huxley, 1975, p.276).

The Buddha Nature present in all living beings is called Self by Vedanists and God by Christians and Jews. Sushila feels the Buddha nature vibrating in all objects small or big. It makes her see the spark of Buddha Nature in a butterfly: "And now remember it: A butterfly on a green leaf, opening and shutting its wings - and it's the Buddha Nature totally present, it's the Clear Light outshining the sun." (Huxley, 1975, p.276). The realisation of Buddha Nature is Enlightenment or Nirvana in Buddhism. The Buddha Nature, also called Mind Essence, despite its presence in all, is blurred by the defilements caused by our individual mind enshrined in ego. The knowledge of our ordinary mind puts impediments on the path of realization of Mind Essence or Buddha Nature. The thoughts of our ordinary mind are the walls which are to be demolished for realising the Buddha Nature. Sushila explains to Laxmi, her mother-in -law the need for decontaminating the mind from thoughts of ordinary mind:

> Let go for it, so that the not thought can come through. Things into Emptiness, Emptiness into suchness. Suchness into things again, into your own mind. Remember what it says in the Sutra. 'Your own great Body of Radiance, is a subject neither to birth nor death, but is the same as the immutable Light, Buddha Amitabha'. (Huxley, 1975, p.276).

The Suchness of which Sushila speaks about is the Reality in its bare form without any distortions. In Buddhist terminology, knowledge of the Absolute means knowledge of *Tathata* or Suchness, which means to go back, to a state of mind before the division of the knowing and the known takes place. The knowledge of Suchness is the knowledge of nondiscrimination. What Sushila says in the above quoted lines about Suchness has its parallel in the following lines of *The Lankavatara Scripture* spoken by Lard Buddha to his disciples:

When appearances and names are put away and all discrimination ceases, that which remains is the true and essential nature of things and, as nothing can be predicted as to the nature of essence, it is called the "Suchness" of Reality. The universal undifferentiated, inscrutable, "Suchness" is the only Reality but it is variously characterised as Truth, Mind-Essence, Transcendental Intelligence, Noble Wisdom, etc. (Goddard, 1952, p.299).

The phrase "not-Thought" used by Sushila to Laxmi refers to the process of stilling the mind from distortions which put hurdle on the path of realization of basic nature spoken by Buddha in *The Surangama Sutra*:

At the end, these attachments and contaminations within your mind develop the consciousness of differences between self and not-self of objects and thus the pure mind becomes entangled in the snarls of attachments and contaminations. Because of their defilement, there rises the distributing manifestation of an external world, but when they are stilled, there remains only empty space, abiding in perfect unity. (Goddard, 1952, p.299).

Sushila, therefore, repeatedly advises Laxmi to free her mind from thoughts of inidividiual mind so that the mind can realise the Emptiness. By Emptiness one does not mean nothingness but the Void behind all the objects of the world. It refers to the process of non-duality, when the mind refrains from differentiation and returns to the root and sees the things in their basic nature i.e. Emptiness. The realization of Void or *Sunyata* behind all the objects sparks off a feeling of inherent oneness. The Buddhist concept of Void leading to Compassion for all gets expressed in the following lines spoken by Sushila:

Sunyat implies karuna. The Void is Light; but it's also compassion. Greedy contemplatives want to possess themselves of the light without bothering about compassion and refuse to bother about the light (Huxley, 1975, p.278).

Thus Buddhism leaves a strong impact on the thinking of Sushila. It is not a superficial imposition on her being but has gone into her soul, resulting in a feeling of compassion for all which can be noticed in her treatment of Will Farnaby after the accident and her sincere nursing of her sick mother-in-law Lakshmi suffering from cancer. She emerges as an incarnation of compassion during such moments at the background of which stands her strong Buddhist conviction.

Dr. Robert MacPhail, as compared to Sushila is a more

serious Buddhist. He has not only realised the Buddhist concepts but has been able to absorb its essence into his being. His strong conviction in Buddhist ethos has made him renounce the pleasures of the world. Previously a doctor, Dr. MacPhail practices when it is needed to save and presently works at the Agricultural Experimental Station on the island of Pala. His strong conviction in Buddhism has imparted a strong power of endurance and tolerance in him for which he courageously bears the shock of the death of his son, Dugald. Though not an ascetic, literally, yet his life has close resemblance with the life of an ascetic. His faith in Buddhism and the clear grasp of Buddhist concepts has made him subdued and has added a note of equipoise to his character. The concept of Tathata or Suchness and Nirvana appear constantly in his meditative moods and visions. While guiding Will one day through the beautiful scenario of Pala, the sight of a lotus pool with frogs jumping into them, flies and bees humming around make him visualize Tathata in them. His observation of the objects of nature is different from the observation of a common man because he looks into the basic nature of things and finds them as being the manifestations of the Absolute Essence:

> Thrusting up from mind, the thick green stems with their turgid buds broke through into the air, and here and there the blue or rosy symbols of enlightment have opened their petals to the Sun and the probing visitations of flies and tiny beetles and the wild bees from the jungle. Darting, pausing in mid-flight, darting again, a score of glittering blue and green dragon flies were hawking for midges. "Tathata". Dr. Robert had whispered "Suchness" (Huxley, 1975, p.108).

Nirvan, according to Buddhism, literally means, extinction of suffering by putting an and to endless cycle of rabirths. The cycle of death and rebirth is moving on the axis of desire, hatred and delusions and Nirvana means overcoming these three enemies. They are known as the Three unwholesome Roots or the Three Poisons or Trividhagni in Sanskrit, underlying all human bondage and misery and projected through the symbols of three animals like the cock, snake and pig holding each other at the cantre of Wheel of Life.Dr.MacPhail defines Nirvana:

> Liberation, Dr.Rober tbegan again,the ending of Sorrow, ceasing to be what you ignorantly think you are and becoming what you are in fact. (Huxley, 1975, p.108).

In the above lines the speaker basically points out 'ignorance' meaning delusion, which puts the greatest obstacle on the path of Nirvana. The words of Dr.Robert bring an echo of the Buddhist Scripture known as Milindapanha.There defining Nirvana Nagasena says:

All the foolish common people take delight in the senses and their objects, are impressed by them, are attached to them. In tha tway they are carried away by the flood, and are not set free from birth,old age and death,from grief, lamentation,pain, sadness, and despair - they are, I say, not set free from suffering,But the well-Informed holy disciples do not take delight in the senses and their objects, are not impressed by them, are not attached to them and in consequence their craving ceases; the cessation of craving leads successively to that of grasping,of becoming, of birth, of old age and death, of grief,lamentation, pain. sadness, and despair - that is to say to the cessation of all this mass of ill. It is thus that cessation is Nirvana. (Conze, 1981, pp.157-158).

Apart from the characters mentioned above,the Buddhist ethos of the novel is imparted by Vijaya Bhattacharya, assistant to Dr.Robert,through whom the novelist has analysed the Buddhist concept of the two types of mind — the individual mind which possesses a sense of duality and the innermost essence of the individual mind hidden within our mind, called Mind which is the absolute. It is the ego which creates a wall in between these two minds. Buddhahood or Nirvana or Enlightment means the falling of this barrier and to be awakend to realize the Mind. Vijaya Bhattacharya similarly explains:

But at the heart of the verminous darkeness sits Enlightment. And that's another thing the child is doing she's unconsciously learning a lesson about herself, she's being told that if she'd only stop giving herself suggestions to the contrary she might discover that her own busy little mind is also Mind with a large M. (Huxley,1975, p.179).

The above mentioned lines give an account of the new educational system for the Palanese children subordinated to the theories of Buddhism. The aim of the novelist to plan an educational system which would help the children from the begining to keep their mind away from the dualities of mind and would help them to realise the Mind, Essence or Absolute in all the objects. This would train them from the begining to look upon other beings as being their own sameness and would be able to look into the basic nature of the

things without forming conceptualization of thoughts and would help them to be awakened to Buddha Nature or Absolute or Mind Essence being shared by all the objects of the world. Huxley explains this process through the Principal delineating the system to Will Farnaby:

Violent feelings,we tell the children, are like earthquakes. They shake us so hard that cracks appear in the wall that separates our private selves from the shared universal Buddha Nature. (Huxley, 1975, p. 207)

The process of feeling the mind from conceptualization, advocated by the novelist falls akin to the process of "emptying oneself" of Zen Buddhism, a distant school of Mahayana Buddhism. The Zen aproach to life means to see the thing as it is. It is a spontaneity of mind by dissociating oneself from the process of conceptualization. So the children are taught:

So we tell the boys and girls to stop thinking and just look. 'But don't look analytically', we tell them, 'Don't look as scientists, even as gardners. Liberate yourselves from everyting you know and look with complete innocence at this infinitely inmprobable thing before you. (Huxley, 1975, p. 207)

Zen is for every day and each and evey moment of life can bring Nirvana. The call of the mynah bird calling, "Here and Now" and repeatd throughout the novel is correlated with the Zen ethos. The words functioning as *leit motif*, makes us recall the immdiate, direct and integral grasping of reality of Zen Buddhism in the midst of Samsara and not in a life of renunciation. This concept again moves closer to the idea of Tantrik Buddhism expressed through Ranga:

If you're a Tantrik, you don't renounce the world or deny its value, you don't try to escape into a Nirvana apart from life, as the monks of the Southern School do. No, you accept the world and you make use of it; you make use of everyting you do, of everyting that happens to you, of all the things you see and hear and taste and touch, as so many means to your liberation from the prison of Yourself.(Huxley, 1975, p. 75-76)

Huxley's liberal and humanistic temperament leads him to advocate a natural life rather than a life of total renunciation. It monitors for accepting the woirld as it is that would simultaneously open up

paths for liberation. His attitude can be summed up in the following words spoken by Sushila: "Everyone's job — enlightment. Which means, here and now, the preliminary job of practising all the Yogas of increased awareness" (Huxley, 1975, p. 236)

The main thrust of th novelist is therefore on making children "become fully human in a society fit for human beings to live in (Huxley, 1975, p. 220). He conceives of a society that would be free from discriminations of caste, creed and race. The final view of Huxley's view of life lies in its reconciliation of science and religion. There is divine spark in everyone and this spark can be recognised only by means of freedom from bondage of our ego.The nearest equivalent for this kind of self knowledge is awareness of Buddha Nature or *Nirvana* or Enlightenment.

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Vijaya Lakshmi & A.K. Srivastava

CLASS AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS IN LITERATURE: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF JOHN O'HARA'S FICTION

The present study is an attempt to observe the impact of the sociological perspective on literature, through one particular aspect, i.e., the treatment of class, and class-consciousness. In this specific reference, the fiction of John O'Hara has been carefully selected. The rationale, behind choosing the fictional world of John Henry O'Hara, lies in the fact that O'Hara, unlike his contemporaries F. Scott Fitzgerald and Hemingway, chose to write about the upper, and the upper-middle-class in a greater detail and with maximum accuracy. Thus, the purpose of this study is to test the theorem of American class-structure, and class-consciousness as recorded by O'Hara vis-a-vis the established sociological tenets of class-stratification of the American society, thereby determining as to how far sociology and literature go together in their observations of the details of the existing social reality.

O'Hara focused on 'the way people talked and thought' and felt',[1] or to be more precise the class-generated behavioural patterns of the people. Again, since the United States has been the prime example of open-class-system, the selection of the American society on the one hand, and O'Hara's fiction, which honestly attempts to picture the living style of the American people through his characters and situations, on the other, seem to be more rational.

John O'Hara's writing career spans the period from 1934, with his masterpiece *Appointment in Samarra*, to 1970 when his last novel *The Ewings* was published. 'Thus, it begins in the `Depression-Era', lives through the second World War, and terminates in the age of outer space. It is the crucial period in the social history of the United States of American and his fiction seems

to be an authoritative custodian of the American sociology of the twenties, the thirties till the sixties. In his novels and short stories, the point of interest is attached to the fact that everywhere, he has attempted to render reality, closely and in comprehensive detail. His characters go about their lives in the twentieth-century United States amidst the complexity of social and economic motives, with their often neurotic temperaments.

As regards the nature of the American stratification structure and the criteria being used to distinguish one stratum from the other, is concerned, Weberian model, where the consumption of goods has been given prime importance, appears to be more appropriate contrary to the Marxian model, which includes the relation of production. Again, while Marx talks of 'economic determinism' in explaining the concept of 'class', Weber adds two other dimensions of 'power' and 'prestige' in the development of the hierarchies. With reference to the American class structure, these three interacting variables have been accorded basic significance by sociologists.

Here it is also noteworthy that in American society the criteria to assign prestige to a status being vague and shifting, the classes are not clearly delineated; they rather tend to overlap with and blur into the adjacent strata.[2] Keeping the looseness of the American class structure in view, some sociologists have traced the indicators of an individual's class status. Most of them have noted occupation, education and income as the main criteria for the determination of class position. Besides, the type of house, quality of neighbourhood and the like have also been taken into consideration. But a number of researches conducted in American society culminate in the finding that occupation is the best single indicator of class status as it has a high degree of correlation with other objective indicators and with community's evaluation of the person occupying the status.[3]

In this study the important point is to observe the behavioural patterns, set of values, and life styles that are exhibited in a particular class. Szymanski and Goetzel have presented these features beautifully. They take class as "a large set of intermarrying families who share a common life style and a common status or prestige ranking in the society, based on a similar economic class position. Members of social class tend to have great many things in common. They tend to have the same general level of education,

to live in the same income level, to have jobs with similar status and economic rewards, to use the same economic pattern, to wear similar style of clothing and in many ways to have similar values, attitude, and perspective, on life".[4]

Again theoretically, the existence of classes in a society is trifurcated in the hands of the conservatives, liberals, and the radicals. Whereas liberals visualise the class as a progressive agent, the radicals see through the economic angle. But the conservatives think of the class a necessity to maintain the social order. A close scrutiny of the class structure of O'Hara's fictional world, places him in this particular category.

Knowledge of one's existence and surroundings is what may be referred to as 'consciousness', whereas 'class-consciousness' refers to this knowledge in relation to a 'social-class', say, '.. of understanding their place in society, and of their interests as a class in relation to other classes."[6] The very rationale of the existence of the social class, is established and supported by 'class-consciousness'. Like a 'social-class', "the 'class-consciousness', is (just) not an automatic process, but one which usually requires considerable educational effort by groups of political organizers."[7] The degree of sharpness of consciousness varies among the different social-classes, and it is most obviously reflected in speech, manners, dress, houses, social-parties, clubs, educational institutions and so on.

The basic structure of society, the functions it performs, the classes which existed in it, and the finest possible narration of the peculiar thought-processes, formulating itself amidst the characteristic consciousness common to the O'Hara protagonists, is the most important aspect of his fiction. A distinct societal type would just not be a misfit from any possible angle of analysis; be it the locality, the house, the automobile, the clubs, the drinks, the shirts, the sexual mores, or the intricacies of speech. Perhaps such an accurate portrayal of the class may even puzzle the expert psycho-sociological thinkers too.

Quite obviously, literature is never written in a vacuum, and it does reflect the incidents, events, manner, mores, the thought-processes, and the concealed, or the obvious trends and so on. The author himself or herself is a person fixed in time and space, answering to a community of which, he is an important and articulate part. Thus, how far an author understands the milieu ad

recreates it, is an interesting aspect of analysis. Establishing an operational method for the positive study of human facts, the Genetic structural sociology gives rise to two possible dimensions. The first one is based on the fact that all reflections on the human sciences are made from within the society, that it is a part of the itellectual life of that society, and of social life as a whole. Secondly, it may be argued that thought is in a very great measure, shaped by society, which it studies.[8] Notwithstanding the differences between the two approaches, we proceed with the thesis that the interaction of the values and the theoretical thoughts peculiar to a society get reflected in a literary creation.

What is peculiarly important in the fictional world inhabited by these characters is their definite nature of relationship to each other , to their social class, and to their own past. O'Hara's commitment to render reality closely in comprehensive detail involves him in the depiction of the special attitudes, gestures, and conventional responses indigenous to a certain class, living in a certain place at a certain time.

Thus, the existence of society, social-class, and class-consciousness, is particular to O'Hara. He believes, "it is now possible for a family to be very, very society, without having to build a ten foot wall to advertise the fact. The society people, now-a-days may prefer to live in a house that's smaller than the porter's lodge on Grandfather's estate, but the smaller house, is if anything harder to get invited to".[9] For O'Hara, society is not as conspicuous as it used to be:

> The disappearance of the stately homes of Newport, the razing of the Fifth avenue town houses, and the popularity of the rather more simple life than that of forty years ago have been taken proof that society itself went bye-bye. The truth of the matter is that it is slightly more difficult for the outsider to identify society, but Society is, if anything, more there than ever.[10]

Stratificational indices in terms of residence, occupation, race religion, wealth, style of life, and so on indicate and determine the extent of social interaction among various classes of society. In occupational terms, division of labour primarily determines social position, and the family primarily maintains it; therefore various social functions do require a certain family-background, besides ability, skill and training. It is in this reference that, "The proper

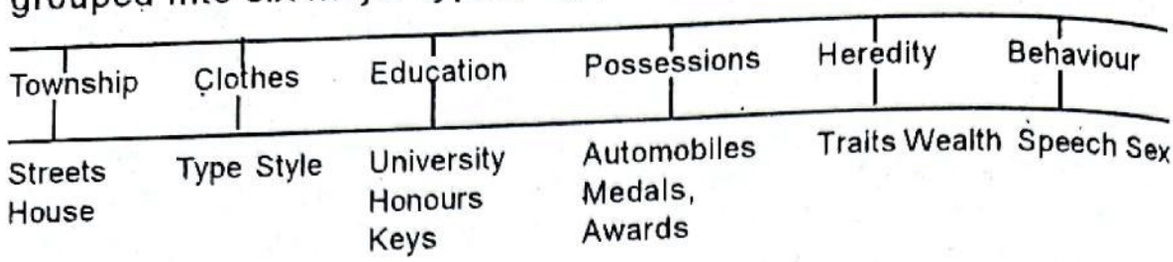
attitude toward lower class people, stranger, family lawyer, and servants is preserved. An elaborate ritual of invitations, entertaining, house-furnishing, appropriate dress, and the use of stationery and introductions must become part of subliminal conduct".[11]

In particular, the pattern of consciousness, in the sociological studies has a subtle reference to the class-groups. In the upper-class, specific importance is attached to exclusiveness, and the sharper consciousness does exist. "The upper-class in most societies tends to be the best organized, with exclusive clubs, schools, and social affairs. They tend to have a high degree of 'class-consiousness'."[12] The factors, which account for this, may be numerous but the lion's share goes to the economic agents of consciousness; for example, the lines of distinctions in a rural society are blurred, whereas in a complex, industrial economy, they tend to be obvious and sharper, though some sociologists believe that in the upper class, "educational attainment carries little prestige. It is not so much a college degree as having attended the proper schools which counts. And a secure upper class is not likely to be snobbish, in the popular sense. Its members do not have to be."[13] These aspects, on the other hand, are very important to the middle class. Viewing the peculiar agents of the consciousness, it might be argued that it is the upper-middle class, which possesses the inseparable charms of institutions —social and educational, sonobbishness of speech, manners and dress, etc.

As a political conservative, O'Hara wanted to keep the upper and the upper-middle class, and its exclusive institutions, because their disappearance would impoverish the American novelist. In his fiction the agents of class-consciousness may, at the first sight, appear to be the instruments of his private experience with his characters, particularly when he talks of as intimate and secretive a subject as sex, but on the whole, his private experience does broaden its horizon to be the experience with the consciousness of his characters. When he ruthlessly fills the pages with the minutest and accurate details, he simply does not overburden the story with his own fascination, rather he concentrates on the finer layers of human psyche, imfolding itself from the deep institutionalization of class-consciousness.

The agents of class and class-consciousness in the whole

fictional world of John O'Hara's American society could safely be grouped into six major types, eg.,



The thematic and structural uses, which O'Hara makes of environment and fate, mirror his philosophic conception that man is the sum of things that happen to him. The environmental influence on character is one of the important techniques of describing behaviour as a function of the tradition of time and place. If O'Hara begins *Elizabeth Appleton, Ten North Frederick,* rom *Ourselves to Know* with a carefully detailed description of a house or what can be seen from it, and *The Lockwood Concern,* with the motivations that have gone into the building of a house, he surely surfaces the agents of class-consciousness, through the houses, streets and the townships. He, himself believed, "These houses express their owners, they affect, as atmosphere those... who must live in them.[14] The sociological studies too confirm the fact that the house reveals a lot about a social class and preserves safely the degree of its consciousness. The members of a particular class do prefer to live in a house suited to their angle of consciousness and "As the status of a resident advances, so do, the size and seclusiveness of his house."[15] Structurally, "Differences among social classes are reflected in the life style characteristic of different neighbourhoods."[16] There are innumerable instances of empirical studies, which concentrate upon the issue of the houses and the value-system accorded to them, but the use of township as an active variable, affecting the human-psyche, in its class conditioning is a matter of special significance in O'Hara's social therapy.

The family home of 'Joseph B. Chapin' the classy hero of O'Hera's celebrated novel, *Ten North Frederick*, preserves the musty relics of vanished civilization:

Even before Mr. Franklin D.Roosevelt and his ideas arrived in Washington, the old home in South Main street and North Frederick had become monuments of the passing way of life, reluctantly and fearsomely recognized as such by sons and daughters,

who had deserted the monuments and visited only at Christmas and family holidays.[17]

This narration furnishes two important clues to a student of sociology, e.g., the novel attaches a great deal of importance to the street, after which it has been named; and secondly that the streets and the townships portray a way of life, based on the class-differences. It becomes most obvious in the cases when O'Hara traces the issue of identity of the people living on the particular street:

In 1909 there was already one marked difference between the people who remained on Frederick and South Main and the people, who lived on Lantenengo.. A Christiana Street man began to something in Gibbsville, and he moved to Lantenengo Street, to live with other people who amounted to something.[18]

Without emphasising the fact any further, it could safely be said that for O'Hara not only that the classes did exist, but there existed an established value-system also. In this specific reference, here it could be noted that it was the rich-class, for whom the streets and the mansions are not only the 'mounuments' but also the sources of their class-identity. Another interesting aspect of 'class-consciousness' in O'Hara's characters relates to their 'secretive-consciousness', even in relation to their homes. 'George Lockwood', the secretive hero of *The Lockwood Concern* builds a secret stairway in his house, and finally kills himself in that doomed stairway, alone and secluded.

Next important agent of consciousness in O'Hara's fiction is yet another characterizer, the clothing. The shirts, the neckties and the coats, which are used by his characters, distinctly place them in the exclusive class of their own. When 'George Lockwood' asked his wife to purchase some shirts, for him O'Hara doesn't fail to make the point; the importance and the peculiarity of being from a class:

I'd like you to go over to Brooks Brothers, and ask for Mr. Huntington. I'll write this down for you. Tell Mr. Huntington I'd like to have half a dozen shirts. He'll know what kind, when you tell him who you are ?[19]

To him it is not only the type of clothes which distinctly tell of a class but also the tailor one patronizes. If the father of a girl the

hero is interested in, runs up a dollars 400 bill with 'Wetzel', the costly New York tailor, the hero must assess the class without much difficulty.[20] In portraying the disturbance going on in the minds of his classy characters, O'Hara uses distinct characterizers. If there is a small lapse in rendering of the details, it is surely not a mistake, rather it signifies the correct use of characterizers to indicate as to how different and peculiar styles do the people of the upper class have to exhibit their inner struggle. In one of his earlier stories the protagonist walks out of his room, with the bow of his hat on the wrong side of his head. O'Hara meant this obvious lapse to indicate intense inner tension. He is very particular in maintaining the distinctive dressing pattern, deserved of a particular class. This agent of class-consciousness is used very intelligently in his fiction. In yet another example, O'Hara uses a miniature hunting horn to describe the possession of an out of class item:

> I once described a man, who was perfectly dressed except for one small item. He was wearing a double breasted suit from a good tailor, which meant that it was well cut and fitted him nicely, the material was quiet but distinctive, his shoes came from London, and were just right, his necktie was a small figured one, his shirt was quiet stripe from a London shirt maker. The man was beautifully turned out except for one thing; in his collar, instead of a gold safety pin, he was wearing miniature hunting horn. That one detail was significant among all the others and made all other significant as well.[21]

Later in the same lecture, while describing the wrong combination of the costly and well chosen outfit with the hunting horn, he concludes, "the guy, in other words, was a bit of phoney."[22]

Like the clothes and the wearing styles, possessions of his characters also speak of the class they come from and the degree of consciousness they observe. An O'Hara hero from a different class is simply not allowed to use an automobile, not meant for that Group on the scale of class consciousness. O'Hara is very particular about giving a Buick, Rolls-Royce or a Franklin to a character. He admitted:

> because it would be out of character for a Buick type man to own a Franklin; it would not be quite so much out of character for a Franklin man to own a Buick. In any case, the novelist has told the reader that Jones owns a Franklin, therefore Jones will behave as a Franklin-owning Jones will behave.[23]

For O'Hara, it is out of character for 'Mr. Sizing' a hardworking businessman to own a Stutz Bearcat, but if Mr. Sizing spends every Sunday at a roadhouse club, it is all right for him to use a Stutz Bearcat.[24] These illustrations do not simply narrate a technique of charaterization, rather they unfold the intricacies of American sociology in O'Hara style. At the same time the matter of insignia about the possessions; be it a car, a mansion at a famous street, membership of the special clubs etc. is special to O'Hara.

> Her family had been in Gibbsville a lot longer than the great majority of people who lived on Lantenengo Street. She was a Doane, and Grandfather Doane had been a drummerboy in the Maxican War and had a Congressional Medal of Honor from the Civil War. Grandfather Doane had been a member of the School board for close to thirty years, before he died, and he was the only man in this part of the State who had the Congressional Medal of Honor.[25]

Educational honours in general, and the University in particular are the concrete agents of class-consciousness in O'Hara's fiction. If a character goes to Yale, he'll surely be different from a man who has been to Princeton or Harvard. Established sociological studies also include education as one of the main determinant in dividing people into social-class levels, "For the upper-class or upper-middle class high school youth, the question is. "What college are you going to ?[26] Not only in the lives of his fictional creations but also in his personal life O'hara had a fancied charm for the educational institutions, and particularly for the Yale University:

> I tried admirably to get in Yale. had A'chie write to the Dean, who was a classmate of his. The result was some very pleasant correspondence for all concerned and the information that my chance of going to Yale was about as good as my chance of going to Heaven... [27]

Obviously for O'Hara going to Yale was not aimed at attaining his occupational advance, but a matter of class-status. in the same manner, O'Hara is very particular about the behaviour and speech of his characters. If a Dutch character comes from Pennsylvania region, he would introduce himself in his typical Pennslyvania Dutch dialect rendering the perfect naturalistic expression of speech, He always considered that the speech of a person decides the socio-economic background, and a single line of an inaccurate dialogue

might render the character unbelievable.

Perhaps O'Hara is the only novelist, who had the guts to use sex, as an agent of class-consciousness. The surface readers may find sex, in O'Hara's fiction, to be spicy material, but it is surely not the case. His projection of sex constantly proves purposeful. This without the least doubts, is in accordance with his manifestation of history, sociology and its poor projection, which he always detested:

> ... Don't think of those poeple as bloodless, cold hunks of marble.The Stuart portaits of George Washington don't indicate that he was a very human being (who had false teeth made of wood), who swore like a trooper, liked his booze, and had money troubles. Lincoln loved to tell dirty stories, and he sometimes went a week without going to bath-room.. Jefferson is said to have a love affair with the wife of his best friend:. Alexander Hamilton was a bastard, an illegitimate child (so was Ramsay MacDonald). and so on and so on.. if you only remind yourself that all people in the history books were first of all people, you begin to view the subject as a human interest story.[28]

Such a bold letter was written by the truthful author to his own daughter, and it clearly explains his philosophy of giving the correct treatment to a social class and its people. Right from 'Julian English, the hero of his first novel, to Ada Ewing, the lesbian heronie of his last novel, all the characters face the problem of sexuality. The exact place of sexual mores in the upper-middle class of America, is rightly housed in his fictional world, which accurately portrays the social history of the period. On the contrary, sociology and history most probably fail to record the minutest emprircal evidence, whereas this novelist has made it all.

The analysis of these characterizers as the agents of class-consciousness, does not speak of the fictional ornaments gratifying the sentimental tendencies of the age, rather it does speak of the social manners and mores of the upper-middle class of the American society of the Post-Depression, and the Post-War period. These characterizers do indicate the rising phenomenon of individualism, which lays stress not only on the private and egocentric mental life, but also on the importance of personal relationships, which are the backbone of the modern society and the novel as well. It is more than obvious that the development of the urban way of life and the economic and social developments,do

find their roots in the rise of individual consciousness, which is very closely connected with the private and subjective tendency of the novel form:

> ...Combination of physical proximity and vast social distance is a typical feature of urbanization, and one of its results is to give a particular emphasis to external and material values in the city-dwellers' attitude to life; the most conspicuous values - those which are common to the visual experience of everyone.[29]

Be it a fictional piece of O'Hara or that of his contemporaries, essentially the stage of its setting is surely of a modern city, wherein the agents of class-consciousness expose the picture of personal relationships. The routine work of an individual hardly provides him the kind of emotional and social security, simply because of his association with various social groups.

Naturally, therefore, the best possible sense of social-security is found in the personal relationships and the classy eccentricities. On the other hand, a way out of this urban life could well be found in the suburaban life, which is an antidote of urbanization itself. The suburban way of life may at the outset provide an escape from the thronged streets, but de facto it houses a particular class in its own seclusiveness. There again the sharper race for maintaining the class structure is evident. This theoretical framework of the socio-economic development of the class-structure finds the perfect empirical projection in O'Hara's fiction. Perhaps; his earnestness in recording what he observed and his eagerness to write about the manners and customs of the upper middle class of American society made him famous as a 'novelist of manners', and a 'social-historian'.

Thus, leaning upon the consumption-pattern,the paper establishes equilibrium between the sociological theorization, and the literary projections. Simultaneously it has also been observed that literature, sometimes reches the innermost layers of the behoviour-pattern, thereby providing an ideal micro-basis to the macro observations of sociology. However, this anlysis is limited to the upper and the upper-middle classes of society in view of the obvious limitations of space, but this co-ordinated approach does make a point that the individualism *vis-a-vis* the economic complex value-system, and above all the class-structure embedded in the

peculiarities of its consciousness, belittle an indivdual and his own knowledge of it, whereas in the novel form this paradox reaches its climax.

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- Urdu-English Phonetics and Phonology

A.R. Kidwai:
- Targets of Satire in Lord Byron's *Don Juan*
- Orientalism in Lord Byron's "Turkish Tales"

Kausar Husain
- Translation and Mother Tongue in Language Teaching.